Berea College Library

Accession 56407

Class 823 W8E

Book C726f

WITHDRAWN

Volume

Source

To.
miss C. W. Hunt

# THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_T5-CUV-614

THE MINSTREL POET

# THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

## STORIES TO BE TOLD

*By*

*PADRAIC COLUM*

DECORATIONS BY
JAY VAN EVEREN

1927

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY · NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1927,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped.
Published November, 1927.

*Printed in the United States of America by*
THE FERRIS PRINTING COMPANY, NEW YORK

F
923.08
C726f

*For my young friend*

*FERGUS JOY*

56407

The author is grateful to the Yale University Press for permission to adapt a story from his book *At the Gateways of the Day*, published by them, and to E. P. Dutton & Co. for a story from *A Boy in Eirinn*. The other books used are published by The Macmillan Company.

## CONTENTS

PAGE

THE KING OF THE CATS

HOW HE CAME TO IRELAND ..... 1

HOW HE MET HIS ENEMY ..... 11

From "The King of Ireland's Son," 1916 and 1925.

THE TWELVE SILLY SISTERS ..... 25

From "The Peep-Show Man," 1924.

KATE MARY ELLEN AND THE FAIRIES ..... 34

From "A Boy in Eirinn," 1913.

THE KING OF THE BIRDS ..... 43

From "The Boy Who Knew What the Birds Said," 1918.

THE BOY PU-NIA AND THE KING OF THE SHARKS ..... 52

From "At the Gateways of the Day," 1924.

THE LOST CITY OF YS ..... 59

From "The Forge in the Forest," 1925.

GOLDEN HOOD ..... 65

From "The Children Who Followed the Piper," 1923.

THE STORY OF ACHILLES

HOW ACHILLES STAYED OUT OF THE BATTLE ..... 79

HOW ACHILLES WENT INTO THE BATTLE ..... 91

From "The Children's Homer: The Adventures of Odysseus and The Tale of Troy," 1918.

# CONTENTS

PAGE

THE STORY OF ODYSSEUS

HOW ODYSSEUS RETURNED TO HIS OWN LAND.. 97

HOW ODYSSEUS DELIVERED HIS HOUSE..... 107
From "The Children's Homer: The Adventures of Odysseus and The Tale of Troy," 1918.

THESEUS AND THE MONSTER..... 127
From "The Golden Fleece and the Heroes Who Lived Before Achilles," 1921.

THE STORY OF SIGURD

THE DRAGON SLAYER..... 144

THE DEATH OF SIGURD..... 154
From "The Children of Odin: The Children's Book of Northern Myths," 1920.

A DREAM ABOUT KING ARTHUR..... 168
From "The Island of the Mighty: Hero Tales of Celtic Britain," 1924.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH..... 182
From "The Voyagers: Being Legends and Romances of Atlantic Discovery," 1925.

STORY TELLING, NEW AND OLD..... 193

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

# THE KING OF THE CATS

## HOW HE CAME TO IRELAND

The King of the Cats stood up. He was a grand creature. His body was brown, and it was striped across as if some one had burned on wood with a hot poker. Like all the race of the Royal Cats of the Isle of Man he was without a tail. But he had extraordinarily fine whiskers. They went each side of his face to the breadth of a dinner dish. He had such eyes that when he turned one of them upward the bird that was flying across dropped from the sky. And when he turned the other eye downward he could make a hole in the floor.

He lived in the Isle of Man. Once he had been

King of the Cats of Ireland and Britain, of Norway and Denmark, and the whole Northern and Western World. But after the Norsemen had won in the wars, the cats of Norway and Britain swore by Thor and by Odin that they would give him no more allegiance. So for a hundred years and a day he got allegiance only from the cats of the Western World—that is, from Ireland and the Islands beyond.

The tribute that was sent to him as King was still well worth having. In May he was sent a boatful of herring. In August he was sent two boatful of mackerel. In November he was given five barrels of preserved mice. At other seasons he had for his tribute one out of every hundred birds that flew across the island on their way to Ireland. He was also sent the following as marks of allegiance and respect—a salmon, to show his dominion over the rivers; the skin of a marten, to show his dominion over the woods; a live cricket, to show his dominion in the houses of men; the horn of a cow, to show his right to a portion of the milk produced in the Western World.

But his tribute became smaller and smaller. A year came when the boat did not come with the herring. Then a year came when he got neither the salmon nor the marten skin, neither the live cricket nor the cow's horn. Then he got righteously and royally indignant. He stood up on

his four paws on the floor of his palace, and declared to his wife that he himself was going to Ireland to know what prevented the sending of his lawful tribute to him.

He went to the top of a cliff and made one great jump. He landed on the deck of a ship that was bringing the King of Norway's daughter to be married to the King of Scotland's son. The ship nearly sank with the crash of his body upon it. He ran up the sails and placed himself on the mast of the ship. There he gathered his feet together and made another spring. This time he landed on a boat that was bringing oak timber to build a King's palace in London. He stood up where the timber was piled highest and he made another spring. This time he landed on the Giant's Causeway that runs from Ireland out into the sea. He went across the Causeway, picking his steps from boulder to boulder, and then walked royally and resolutely on the ground of Ireland. A man was riding on horseback with a woman seated on the saddle behind him. The King of the Cats waited until they came up to him.

"My good man," said he very grandly, "when you go back to your house tell the ash-covered cat in the corner that the King of the Cats has come to Ireland to visit him."

His manner was so grand that the man took off his hat and the woman bowed her head. Then the

King of the Cats sprang into a branch of a tree of the forest and slept till it was past the midday heat.

It was long past the heat of the day when the man and woman he had met spoke about the meeting. When they had eaten their supper and when the man had smoked his second pipe, he said to the woman:

"That was a wonderful thing that happened to us to-day. A cat to walk up to two Christians and say to them, 'Tell the ashy pet in your chimney corner at home that the King of the Cats has come to visit him.' "

No sooner were these words said than the lean, gray, ash-covered cat that lay on the hearthstone sprang up.

"I will say this," said the man, "it's a bad time when two Christians like ourselves are stopped on the way back from the market and ordered—ordered, no less—to give a message to one's own cat lying on one's own hearthstone."

"By my fur and claws, you're a long time coming to his message—what is it, anyway?" said the cat that was standing up on the hearthstone.

"The King of the Cats has come to Ireland to visit you," said the man, very much surprised.

"It's a wonder you told it at all," said the cat, walking to the door. "And where did you see his Majesty?"

"You shouldn't have spoken about it at all," said the man's wife to him.

"And how did I know a cat could understand?" said the man back to her.

"When you have done talking amongst yourselves," said the cat, "would you tell me where you met his Majesty?"

"Nothing will I tell you," said the man, "until I have your own name from you."

"My name," said the cat, "is Quick-to-Grab, and well you should know it."

"Not a word will we tell you," said the woman, "until we hear what the King of the Cats is doing in Ireland. Is he bringing wars and rebellions into the country?"

"Wars and rebellions—no, ma'am," said Quick-to-Grab, "but deliverance from oppression. Why are the cats of this country lean and lazy and covered with ashes? It is because the cat that goes outside the house in the sunlight, to hunt or to play, is made to suffer with the loss of an eye."

"And who makes them suffer with the loss of an eye?" said the woman.

"One whose reign is nearly over now," said Quick-to-Grab. "But tell me where you saw his Majesty?"

"No," said the man.

"No," said the woman, "for we don't like your

impertinence. Back with you to the hearthstone, and watch the mouse hole for us."

Quick-to-Grab walked straight to the door.

"May no prosperity come to this house," he said, "for denying me, when I asked, where the King of the Cats was pleased to speak to you."

But he put his ear to the door when he went outside and he heard the woman say:

"The horse will tell him that we met the King of the Cats a mile this side of the Giant's Causeway."

(That was a mistake on her part. The horse could not have told it at all, because horses never know the language that is spoken in houses—only cats know it fully and dogs know a little of it.)

Quick-to-Grab now knew where the King of the Cats might be found. He went creeping by hedges, loping across fields, bounding through woods until at last he came under the branch in the forest where the King of the Cats was still resting.

A long time he had been there. The heat of the day had passed, the cool of the evening had come on, and still neither retainer, vassal, nor subject had come to do him service. He waited on the branch of the tree until the moon was in the sky like a roast duck on a dish of gold. And he was vexed, I can tell you, at the want of respect that he had been treated with.

It was then that Quick-to-Grab came under the branch. He mewed a little in Egyptian, which is the ceremonial language of the cats. The King of the Cats came to the end of the branch.

"Who are you, vassal?" said he in Phœnician.

"A humble retainer of my lord," said Quick-to-Grab in High Pictish (this is a language very suitable to cats but only their historians now use it).

They continued their conversation in Irish.

"What sign will I show to the others that will make them know that you are the King of the Cats?" said Quick-to-Grab.

The King of the Cats ran up the tree and pulled down heavy branches. "There is a sign of my royal prowess," he said.

"It's a good sign," said Quick-to-Grab.

They were about to talk again when Quick-to-Grab put down his tail and ran up another tree, greatly frightened.

"Can you not stay still while you are speaking to your lord and master?" said the King of the Cats to him.

"Old-fellow Badger is coming this way," said Quick-to-Grab, "and when he puts his teeth in he never lets go."

Then, without saying a word, the King of the Cats jumped down from the tree. Old-fellow

Badger was coming through the glade. But when he saw the King of the Cats crouching there he stopped and bared his terrible teeth. The King of the Cats bent himself to spring. Then Old-fellow Badger turned around and went lumbering back.

"Oh, by my claws and fur," said Quick-to-Grab, "you are the real King of the Cats. Let me be your Councillor. Let me advise your Majesty. Know that the cats of Ireland are impoverished and oppressed. They are under a terrible tyranny."

"Who oppresses my vassals, retainers, and subjects?" said the King of the Cats.

"The Eagle-Emperor. He has made a law that no cat may leave a man's house as long as the birds (he makes an exception in the case of owls) have any business abroad."

"I will tear him to pieces," said the King of the Cats in a terrible voice. "How can I reach him?"

"No cat has thought about reaching him," said Quick-to-Grab. "They only think of keeping out of his way. Now let me advise your Majesty. None of our enemies must know that you have come into this country. You must appear as a common cat."

"What, me?" said the King of the Cats.

"Yes, your Majesty, for the sake of the deliverance of your subjects you will have to appear as a common cat."

"And be submissive and eat scraps?"

"That will be only in the daytime," said Quick-to-Grab, "in the nighttime you will have your court and your feasts."

"If I have to appear as a house cat, at least let the place I stay in be no hovel," said the King of the Cats. "I shall refuse to go into a house where there are washing days—damp clothes before a fire and all that."

"I shall use my best diplomacy to safeguard your comfort and dignity," said Quick-to-Grab; "please invest me as your Prime Minister."

The King of the Cats invested Quick-to-Grab by biting the fur around his neck. Then the King and his Prime Minister parted. Quick-to-Grab, the day after, had a consultation with the Seven Elders of the Cat Kin, and it was decided that the blacksmith's forge would be the fittest residence for the King of the Cats. It was clean and commodious. But the best reason of all for his going there was this: people and beasts from all parts came into the forge and the King of the Cats might learn from their talk and discussions where the Eagle-Emperor was and how he might be destroyed. And as soon as the King of the Cats

was settled in the forge, Quick-to-Grab made a journey through the countryside. He went into every house and whispered a word to every cat who was there. Whether that cat was watching a mouse hole, or chasing crickets, or playing with kittens, when he or she heard that word they sat up and considered.

## HOW THE KING OF THE CATS MET HIS ENEMY

The blacksmith's forge was not a bad residence for a King living unbeknownst. It was dry and warm. The King of the Cats liked the look of the flames as they mounted up with the blowing of the bellows. He used to sit on a heap of old saddles on the floor and watch the horses being shod or waiting to be shod. He listened to the talk of the men who came in. The people of the forge treated him respectfully, and they often referred to his size, his appearance, and his fine manners.

Every night he went out to a feast that the cats prepared for him. Quick-to-Grab would sit by his right hand and give him advice at these meetings. He warned his Majesty not to be too haughty (as a King might be inclined to be) to any creature in the forge.

The King of the Cats took this advice. He used even to twitch back his ears as a mark of respect to Mahon, the hound whose kennel was just outside the forge. He even made advances to the rooster who walked up and down outside.

But it was very hard to bear with this rooster. He used to strut up and down, saying to himself

over and over again, "I'm Cock-o'-the-Walk, I'm Cock-o'-the-Walk." Sometimes he would come into the forge and say it to the horses. It was most annoying to have such a creature around. The King of the Cats wondered how human beings could put up with a creature who was so stupid and so vain. He had a red comb that fell over one eye. He had purple feathers in his tail. He had great spurs on his heels. He used to put his head on one side and yawn when the King of the Cats appeared.

Cock-o'-the-Walk used to come into the forge at night and sleep on the bellows. And when the King of the Cats came back from the feasts he used to waken up and say, "I'm Cock-o'-the-Walk, I'm Cock-o'-the-Walk. The cats are not a respectable people."

One day there were men in the forge. They were talking to the smith. Said one, "Could you tell us, smith, where iron came from?"

The King of the Cats knew what the answer was, but he said nothing, for Quick-to-Grab had warned him not to let human beings know that he understood and could converse in their language. Cock-o'-the-Walk came to the door of the forge and held his head as if he were listening to what the men were saying.

"I can't tell where iron came from," said the smith, "but if that rooster could talk he could tell

you. The world knows that the rooster is the wisest and the most ancient of creatures."

"I'm Cock-o'-the-Walk," said the rooster to a rusty ass's shoe.

"Yes, the rooster is a wonderful creature," said the man who had asked the question.

"Not wonderful at all," said the King of the Cats, "and if you had asked me I could have told you where iron came from."

"And where did iron come from?" asked the smith.

"From the Mountains of the Moon," said the King of the Cats.

The men in the forge put their hands on their knees and looked down at him. Mahon, the hound, came into the forge with other hounds at his tail, and seeing the men look at the King of the Cats, Mahon put his nose to him. Cock-o'-the-Walk flapped his wings insolently. The King of the Cats struck at his red hanging comb with his paw. The rooster flew up in the air. The King of the Cats sprang out of the window, and, as he did, Mahon and the other hounds sprang after him.

But by the magical powers they possessed it was known to all the cats in the country that their King was being pursued by the hounds. Then on every hearthstone a cat howled. Cats sprang to the doors, overturning cradles upon children. They stood upon the threshold and all made the

same curse: "That ye may break your backs, ye hounds, before ye catch the King of the Cats."

When he heard the howls of his retainers, vassals, and subjects, the King of the Cats turned over on his back and clawed at the first hound that came after him. He stood up then. So firmly did he set himself upon his four legs that the hounds that dashed up on him did not overthrow him. He humped up his body and lifted his forepaws. The hounds held back. A horn sounded. They made that an excuse to get away from the claws and the teeth, the power and the animosity of the King of the Cats.

Then, even though it might cost each and every one of them the loss of an eye, the cats that had sight of him came running up to him. "We will go with you, my Lord, we will help you, my Lord," they all cried together.

"Go back to the hearthstones," said the King of the Cats. "Go back and be civil and quiet again in the houses. You will hear of my deeds. I go to find the tracks of our enemy, the Eagle-Emperor."

When they heard that announcement the cats lamented, and the noise of their lamentation was so dreadful that horses broke their harness where they were yoked; men and women lost the color of their faces, thinking some dreadful visitation was coming on the land; every bag of oats and rye

turned five times to the right and five times to the left; dishes were broken, knives were hurled round, and the King's castle was shaken to the bottom stone.

"Never," said the King of the Cats to himself, "never will I stay by the hearthstone and submit to be abused by cocks and hounds and men. I will range the world openly now and seek out the enemy of the Cat Kind, the Eagle-Emperor."

And without once turning his back he went toward the wood that was filled with his enemies, the birds. The wren, the smallest of the birds, saw him and knew him for the King of the Cats. The wren flew through the wood to summon the Hawk Clan. But it was toward sunset now and the hawks had taken up their stations at the edge of the wood to watch that they might pick up the farmer's chickens. They wouldn't turn an eye when the wren told them that a cat was in the wood during the time forbidden to cats to be outside the houses of men. "It is the King of the Cats," said the wren. But no one of the hawks lifted a wing. They were there waiting for the chicks that would stray about the moment after sunset.

But if the wren couldn't rouse the Hawk Clan she was able to rouse the other bird tribes. "A cat, a cat, on your lives, a cat!" she called out as she flew through the wood. The rooks that were

going home now rose above the trees, cawing threats. The blackbirds, thrushes, and jays screamed as they flew before the King of the Cats. The woodpeckers, hedge sparrows, tom-tits, robins, and linnets chattered as they flew behind him. Sometimes the young rooks made a great show of attacking him. They flew down from the flock. "He is here, here, here," they cawed and flew up again. The rooks kept telling themselves and the other birds in the wood what they were going to do with the King of the Cats.

He was annoyed by the uproar the birds were making, but he did not want to enter into any battle with them. He was on his way to the house of the Hag of the Wood who was then known as the Hag of the Ashes. Now as this is the first time you have heard of the Hag of the Ashes, I'll have to tell you how the King of the Cats had heard of her and of how he knew where her house was in the wood.

He had heard of her from Quick-to-Grab, his Councillor. "If ever you need the council of a human being, go to no one else but the Hag of the Ashes," he had said. "In the very center of the wood four ash trees are drawn together at the tops, wattles are woven round these ash trees, and in the little house made in this way the Hag of the Ashes lives, with no one near her but a goat that is her only company." The King of the

Cats was now in the center of the wood. He saw four ash trees drawn together at their tops.

Now the Hag of the Ashes had a bad neighbor. This was a crane that had built her nest across the roof of the little house. The nest prevented the smoke from coming out at the top and the house was filled with smoke. The hag could hardly keep alive on account of the smoke, and she could neither take away the nest nor banish the bird.

The crane was there when the King of the Cats sprang into the ash trees that made the roof of the house. She was sitting on her nest, but when the King of the Cats sprang into the tops of the trees she slipped away and sailed over the top of the wood. "Time for me to be going," said the crane. And from that day to this she never came back to the house of the Hag of the Ashes.

"Oh, thanks to you, good creature," said the Hag of the Ashes, coming out of the house. "Tear down her nest now and let the smoke rise up through the roof."

The King of the Cats tore the sticks and the wool that the crane's nest was made of, and the smoke came up through the top of the house. "Oh, thanks to you, good creature, that has destroyed the cross crane's nest. Come down on my floor now and I'll do everything that will serve you."

The King of the Cats jumped down on the floor

of the hag's house and saw the Hag of the Ashes sitting in the corner. She was a little, little woman in a gray cloak. All over the floor there were heaps and heaps of ashes, for she used to light a fire in one corner and when it was burnt out light another beside the ashes of the first. The smoke had never gone through the hole in the roof since the crane had built on the top of the house. Her face was yellow and her eyes were half closed on account of the smoke.

"Do you know who I am, Hag of the Ashes?" said the King of the Cats when he stood on her floor.

"You are a cat, honey," said the Hag of the Ashes.

"I am the King of the Cats."

"The King of the Cats you are indeed. And it was you who let the smoke out of the top of my little house by destroying the nest the cross crane built on it."

"It was I who did that."

"Welcome to you then, King of the Cats. And what service can the Hag of the Ashes do for you in return?"

"I would go to where the Eagle-Emperor is. You must show me the way."

"By my cloak, I will do that. The Eagle-Emperor lives on the top of the Hill of Horns."

"And how can I get to the top of the Hill of Horns?"

"I don't know how you can get there at all. All over the hill is bare starvation. No four-footed thing can reach the top—no four-footed thing, I mean, but my goat that's tied to the hawthorn bush outside."

"I will ride on the back of your goat to the top of the Hill of Horns."

"No, no, good King of the Cats. I have only my goat for company and how could I bear to be parted from him?"

"Lend me your goat, and when I come back from the Hill of Horns I will plate his horns with gold and shoe his hoofs with silver."

"No, no, good King of the Cats. How could I bear my goat to be away from me, and I having no other company?"

"If you do not let me ride on your goat to the top of the Hill of Horns I will leave a sign on your house that will bring the cross crane to build her nest on the top of it again."

"Then take my goat, King of the Cats, take my goat, but let him come back to me soon."

"I will do that. Come with me now and bid him take me to the top of the Hill of Horns."

The King of the Cats marched out of the house and the Hag of the Ashes hobbled after him. The goat was lying under the hawthorn bush. He put

his horns to the ground when they came up with him.

"Will you go to the Hill of Horns?" said the Hag of the Ashes.

"Indeed, that I will not," said the goat.

"Oh, the soft tops of the hedges on the way to the Hill of Horns—sweet in the mouth of a goat they should be," said the Hag of the Ashes. "But my own poor goat wants to stay here and eat the tops of burnt-up thistles."

"Why didn't you tell me of the hedges on the way to the Hill of Horns before?" said the goat, rising to his feet. "To the Hill of Horns I'll go."

"And will you let a cat ride on your back to the Hill of Horns?"

"Indeed, I'll not do that."

"Then, my poor goat, I'll not untie the rope that's round your neck, for you can't go to the Hill of Horns without the cat riding on your back."

"Let him sit on my back then and hold my horns, and I'll take no notice of him."

The Hag of the Ashes untied the rope that was round his neck, and the King of the Cats jumped up on the goat's back, and they started off on the path through the wood. "Oh, how I'll miss my goat, until he comes back to me with gold on his horns and silver on his hoofs," the Hag of the Ashes cried after them.

And so the King of the Cats started out to meet his enemy mounted on the back of a goat. But what should a goat do but ramble down laneways, wander across fields, stray along hedges, and stay to rest under shady trees? All this the Hag's goat did. But at last he brought the King of the Cats to the foot of the Hill of Horns.

And what was the Hill of Horns like? It was hills of stones on the top of a hill of stones. Only a goat could foot it from pebble to stone, from stone to boulder, from boulder to crag, and from crag to mountain shoulder. Well indeed the goat did in climbing that stony way. But then thunder sounded; lightning struck fire out of the stones, the wind mixed itself with the rain, and a tempest pelted cat and goat. The goat stood on a mountain shoulder. The wind rushed up from the bottom and carried the companions to the top of the Hill of Horns. Down sprang the cat. But the goat stood on his hind legs to butt back at the wind. The wind caught him between the beard and the under quarters and swept him from the top down the other side of the hill (and what happened to the hag's goat after that I never heard). The King of the Cats put his claws into the crevices of a standing stone and held to it with great tenacity. And then, when the wind abated and he looked across his shoulder, he found

that he was standing beside the nest of the Eagle-Emperor.

It was a hollow edged with rocks, and round that hollow were scattered the horns of the deer and the goats that the Eagle-Emperor had carried off. And in the hollow was a calf, and a hare, and a salmon. The King of the Cats went into the Eagle-Emperor's nest. First he ate the salmon. Then he stretched himself between the hare and the calf and he waited for his enemy, the Eagle-Emperor.

At last he appeared. Down he came to his eyrie, making circles in the air. He lighted on the rocky rim of his nest. The King of the Cats rose with body bent for the spring, and if the Eagle-Emperor was not astonished at his appearance it was because an eagle can never be astonished.

The Eagle-Emperor spread down his wings till they were great broad shields. He bent down his outspread tail. He bent his neck so that his eyes might look into the creature that faced him. And his cruel, curved, heavy beak was ready for the stroke.

The King of the Cats sprang into the air. The eagle lifted himself up but the cat came down on his broad back. The Eagle-Emperor screamed his war scream and flew off the hill. He struck at the King of the Cats with the backs of his broad wings. Then he plunged down. On the

stones below he would tear his enemy with beak and claws.

It was the cat that reached the ground. As the eagle went to strike at him, he sprang again and tore the eagle's breast. Then the Eagle-Emperor caught the King of the Cats in his claws and flew up again, screaming his battle scream. Drops of blood fell on the ground. The eagle had not a conqueror's grip on his enemy, and the cat was able to tear at him. And now their battle was being fought in the air.

It happened that Curoi, King of the Fairies of the South, was marching at the head of his troop to play a game of hurling with the Fianna of Ireland. Just when the ball was about to be thrown into the air, the scream of the eagle was heard and the eagle and the King of the Cats were seen mixed together in their struggle. One troop took the side of the eagle and the other took the side of the cat. The men of the country came up and took sides, too. Then the men began to fight amongst themselves, and some of them were left dead on the ground. And this went on until there were companies of the men of the countryside fighting each other on account of the Eagle-Emperor and the King of the Cats. The King of the Fairies and the Chief of the Fianna marched their men away to a hilltop where they might watch the battle in the air and the battles on the ground.

"If this should go on," said Curoi, "our troops will join in and man and fairies will be slaughtered. We must end the combat in the air." And saying this, he took up the hurling ball and flung it at the cat and the eagle.

Eagle and cat came down on the ground. The cat was about to spring, the eagle was about to pounce, when Curoi darted between them and struck both of them with his spear. And there they are to this day, a stone eagle with his wings outspread, and a stone cat with his teeth bared and his paws raised. And the Eagle-Emperor and the King of the Cats will remain like that until Curoi strikes them again with his fairy spear.

When the cat and the eagle were turned into stone the men of the country wondered for a while, and then they went away from the place. And the Fairies of the South and the Fianna of Ireland played the hurling match—it was for the hand of Aine, the daughter of Mananaun who is Lord of the Sea—and the Fianna of Ireland won the match, and that is all I have to tell you about the King of the Cats.

*"The King of Ireland's Son," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Willy Pogany. The Macmillan Company, 1925. (First published by Henry Holt & Co., 1916.)*

# THE TWELVE SILLY SISTERS

The Lord of Omey went to visit his cousin, the fair and considerate Nabla, one evening, and he found her molding candles, which was the right and proper thing for a young woman to be doing when the dark nights of winter were coming on. "My jewel you are," said the Lord of Omey to his cousin, "and it's not you that the Pooka will want to carry off to-night." He said that because it was Hallowe'en, and on Hallowe'en the Pooka goes through the country and he carries off whoever he meets that night who has no business being abroad.

The Pooka has the shape of a horse—the shape of a great black horse. On Hallowe'en, as I have said, he goes galloping through the countryside, and he gives the Pooka's jaunt to this or that person that he meets going home late. Sometimes what the Pooka does in this regard is good, but more often it is bad. It would be a bad thing if he carried off the little girl who has gone down the road to fetch the fiddler in to play for us. And it would be a bad thing, the Lord of Omey thought, if the Pooka would carry off any one who had any relation to him. But he knew that whoever the

Pooka might carry off it would not be his cousin, the fair and considerate Nabla, who, as I have said, was molding candles against the dark nights that were coming on, and who had no intention of being abroad without having any business being abroad, on any night, letting alone the night of Hallowe'en. "My jewel you are," said the Lord of Omey to her, "and to-morrow we will go to the Abbey, and I will wed you there and give you the keys of my castle, upstairs and downstairs, the attic and the cellar." She gave him her word that she would go with him, because, as I have told you, Nabla was wise and considerate, and besides she loved O'Tool, the Lord of Omey, every bit as much as he loved her.

Now the Lord of Omey and Nabla, the lady he was to marry, were inside the Abbey church. The Lord of Omey was standing before the altar with the ring between his fingers, when a tall, fiery-headed fighting man appeared at the church door. With the fright he got at seeing him there, O'Tool dropped the ring upon the flagstones.

"My master sent me to tell you, O'Tool," said the red-headed fighting man, "that you are not to get married."

"Not to get married!" said the Lord of Omey.

"At least, not to get married to the woman that's before you," said the red-headed fellow. "But my master isn't one to keep you from hav-

ing a spouse; he's sending you one of his own daughters. The priest needn't go."

Now, although the O'Tools were Lords of Omey, they had lords over them, and the lords that were over them were the O'Flaherties, and the O'Flaherties were all terrible fighting men. Their battle shout was enough to make every one else leave the battlefield. The sight of their fiery red heads coming across the country was enough to make the people put a bar on the gate of the town and a bolt on every house inside of it. And the O'Tools were the mildest clan in the whole of Connacht. Not a man of them would say "boo" to a goose belonging to one of the O'Flaherties, let alone to one of their fighting men.

"My master says he's sending you one of his own daughters," said the red-headed fighting man. "The priest needn't go."

And the priest did not go. The messenger did not go, either. Indeed, the only one who went out of the Abbey church was the fair and considerate Nabla. She went to the castle of Omey, and got there before any of the rest of them. Did I tell you that she had got the keys of the castle before she came up to the altar? She had, then. She opened the attic and went in, and her mother went along with her, and there the two of them stayed in O'Tool's castle.

The Abbey church was filled with redheads, for

all the O'Flaherties came in. And with them came the first of O'Flaherty's daughters, the one that was to be bride to the O'Tool.

There was nothing for the Lord of Omey to do but to pick up the ring he had let fall upon the flagstones, take the lady's finger out of her mouth, and put the ring on her finger. And so they were married, the Lord of Omey and Gibbie, the daughter of O'Flaherty.

And when they went back to O'Tool's castle the bride did everything that a silly person would do. That day she gave wine to the tax-gatherers and water to the poets. She left honey beside a boy and expected him not to eat it. She left milk beside a child and expected it not to drink it. She left food beside a generous man and expected him not to give it away to the hungry ones who came to the door. I could spend the whole of Hallowe'en night (and it's not the shortest night of the year) telling you of all the silly things Gibbie did when she came into the castle of Omey.

She gave orders that O'Tool's horses were to have their shoes taken off before they came into the castle yard. This was to prevent their tramping and stamping while her kinsfolk ate around O'Tool's tables. And when the Lord of Omey heard that order given, he cried tears down. His gallant horses to be lamed by coming without shoes over the sharp cobbles of the castle yard!

But he could do nothing about it, for the order was given to one of the redheads who had come out of her father's country. O'Tool cried for his horses that night, as he sat at his wedding supper.

But Nabla, his wise and considerate cousin, was above in the attic. The order that was given was told her, and she came down the backstairs of the castle in the blackness of the night. She went out into the castle yard, and she took the straw from under the cows in the byres, and she strewed the stones of the castle yard with the straw. And no one knew what she did but Pincher, the watchdog that had but one tooth. The horses came in, and they went silently upon the straw, and their hoofs were not hurt by the sharp cobblestones, and so they came safe.

The next morning, before she would get up, Gibbie had the servants go out into the garden and bring her in the sundial, so that she should know what time it was.

She was silly, and her sisters were silly, too. The eleven of them came to spend a while with her. So that they might not be lonely in O'Tool's castle, Gibbie had a bed made that would hold all the eleven of them. But she forgot to have a blanket made that would go across that bed. What she gave them covered this one and that one, but never all of them. They pulled the cover from one to the other of them, but they were cold sleep-

ing and cold waking up every night they were in O'Tool's castle.

The eleven sisters got tired of having so little sleep and so much perishing in the bed that was made for them, and they made up their minds to go back to their father's castle in Ballinakill. Gibbie, their sister, knew what was due to ladies of their rank and degree, and she would not let them go unattended. And first she called on Nabla, thinking that she was the goose girl, to go with them. But then she decided that she herself was the best company that her sisters could have, and she made up her mind to go halfway with them.

When they were a little way outside the castle they sat down by the edge of a pool to bathe their feet. They were still sitting there when the one they took to be the goose girl came up to them. "Why are you sitting there so still, ladies?" said she when she came up to them, "when the day is so fair for your journey."

"Fair it is," said Gibbie, "but what can we do? Our legs in the pool are all mixed up together and none of us can recognize our own legs, and how can we go off walking when we don't know what legs to pull up?"

"What will you give me," said the one they took to be the goose girl, "if I make each of you know your own legs?"

"I'll give you the only shiny thing I have about me," said Gibbie, "the ring off my finger."

What did she do but pull off a piece of a bramble bush. She went back to the pool and drew the brambles along the legs of each of the sisters. They pulled their legs out of the pool immediately. "Though our legs are scratched," said they, "we know them now, and it is better we should be going on our way with scratched legs than be sitting here the whole of the day with our legs in the cold water."

"But give me my reward."

Gibbie took the ring off her finger and gave it to her. The goose girl, who was really the wise and considerate Nabla, went back to the castle, and the sisters started off again, the twelve of them.

And when they were halfway Gibbie would have left them to go back to the castle, but her sisters would not let her go without company, and so they went halfway back to the castle with her. And she went halfway back with them. And they went halfway back with her. And they were going and coming, and coming and going, until the black night came down upon the ground.

And it was the night of Hallowe'en, the night when the Pooka goes abroad. He came upon the sisters as they were going backward and forward and forward and backward on the road between

Omey and Ballinakill. He was a horse so black that you could see yourself in his skin. He came galloping up, with fire in his eyes and froth on his jaws. He took the twelve sisters on his back and away with him, through bushes and briers, over hills and through hollows, until he brought them to a certain place that I know of.

It is called the Townland of Mischance. Where that place is is written down, but then, as they say, An rud e scribheann an Puca leigheann se fein e. "What the Pooka writes, only he himself can read." In the Townland of Mischance the twelve sisters stayed, and every one in it was like themselves. They gave wine to the tax-gatherers and water to the poets. They left food near a generous man and expected him not to give it to the hungry ones who came to the door. And I think I was in that place myself a day or two ago.

But the place I was in then and the place I'm in now aren't alike. Here we're wise enough not to go abroad on Hallowe'en night unless we have business to bring us abroad. We're not the sort would ever be given the Pooka's jaunt. Well, there Gibbie and her eleven sisters stayed, and the O'Flaherties, for all their chasing up and down the country, were never able to find them. The sisters were in their right place there, and they were well enough off.

And the Lord of Omey met his cousin, the fair

and considerate Nabla, some time after his wife and her sisters went away from him. He was walking near the Abbey church and she was walking near the same place. They went in together. And there he married her. And he didn't have to look for a second ring, either—Nabla had in her hand the ring he was ready to put upon her finger the time before.

*"The Peep-Show Man," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Lois Lenski. The Little Library, The Macmillan Company, 1924.*

# KATE MARY ELLEN AND THE FAIRIES

There was once a little girl who lived near this very place, and she was as good a little girl as ever put a shawl across her head. Kate Mary Ellen was her name. One Saint Patrick's Day Kate Mary Ellen thought that she would get a bunch from the shamrocks that grew on the *rath* over there.

That high grassy mound that has the old trees growing on it—that is the *rath;* it is there from the ancient days, and the old people used to say that the fairies were always going to it and from it. No one had seen or heard of fairies on it lately. Still, the *rath* wasn't a place that people went to. Kate Mary Ellen looked over to it: she was minding her mother's cow at the time; she left the cow in a grassy place and went toward it.

The little girl had trouble in getting to the flat top of the mound, for there were sloe bushes and thorn bushes growing round it like a fence; she got through them at last and came out on a clear ground that had old twisted thorn trees growing on it.

She plucked a piece of shamrock and she thought that she had never seen such bright green on shamrocks before as were on the ones she plucked. She looked toward where she had got them, and, lo and behold! there was some one there—a little fellow, and he was looking at her from behind a hawthorn bush. By the size of him and by the shape of his boots she knew that he was a fairy man. And then, behind every hawthorn bush, Kate Mary Ellen saw more of them. She was that flustered that she stood there without moving a limb.

Then one who had sharp eyes and very high looks came over to her and said, "Are you an obedient child?"

"I am, sir," said Kate Mary Ellen.

"Then," said the Fairy Commander, "you are the person to do something that we want to have done." All who were there stood round and looked her over. "Take these shamrocks in your hand and go and stand on the bridge," said the Commander to her, giving her a bunch of green, green shamrocks. "A coach will pass and you must contrive to stop it. Inside of the coach will be a big man, and what you'll have to do is hand him this bunch of shamrocks and say to him, 'Daniel O'Connell, the fairy people of Ireland will not go against you.' Will you be able to do that?"

"I will, sir," said Kate Mary Ellen.

"Say the words after the Commander," said another of the fairies, a middling sharp-looking little fellow.

"'Daniel O'Connell, the fairies of Ireland won't go against you,'" said Kate Mary Ellen.

"And do you know where you're to stand?" said the second fairy to her.

"I'm to stand on the bridge," said Kate Mary Ellen. But then she said, "Asking your pardon and the pardon of all here, but am I to stand on the bridge that's on the Old Road?"

"The bridge that the coaches go over," said the second fairy, looking very severely at her.

"There's no bridge upon that road, asking your pardon again," said Kate Mary Ellen.

"Go and stand on the bridge and do the Commander's bidding. You know where the bridge is —well, go and stand there."

"Yes, sir," said Kate Mary Ellen, and saying that, and with the shamrocks in her hand, she went off. She never stopped running until she was on the Old Road. The grass was growing near to the middle of that road, for no one ever traveled it now but a goose or an ass. She went to the bridge. She stationed herself on it, and she waited and waited. No coach came, and soon she began to think how surprised she would be to see a coach upon that road. All she heard was the

trout in the stream below, for now and again an odd one going past leaped up. She stayed there so long that she began to feel anxious about the cow she had left in a nook of pasture. Still no coach came along. And at last Kate Mary Ellen ran back to Martin Murphy's house.

"Will there be a coach on the Old Road to-day?" said she, as soon as she came to the door.

"A coach!" said he. "A coach on the Old Road! A coach on the Old Road to-day! What can the girl be thinking about? Why, it's forty years, no less, since a cart went on the road, letting alone a coach!"

"And will Daniel O'Connell not be coming that way?" said Kate Mary Ellen.

"Daniel O'Connell!" said Martin Murphy. "What do they be teaching you in school? Don't you know that it's sixty years since Daniel O'Connell was a living man? Go home now and read a history book."

But Kate Mary Ellen didn't go home. Her heart was twisted with anxiety about the cow she had left in the nook of pasture. She ran toward where she had left it. But on the mound she saw fairy sentries and they beckoned to her. Up through the bushes she went again; she came on the top and she saw the fairies there. They had trailing cloaks on and swords in their belts, and

they were consulting together, all looking very anxious.

"Well," said the second fairy, "and what did Daniel O'Connell say?"

"He's not coming that way at all, and it's years and years since a coach went over the bridge."

Well, when she said that, looks were passed from one to the other of the fairy men. "Could it be that we're late?" said the Commander.

"Not at all," said the one who was second in command. "Not at all," said he with great assurance. "But in case he went by early we'll take horse."

"Yes," said the Commander, "we'll take horse this minute, and we'll wait for Daniel O'Connell at Tara. This girl will have to come with us, for it is appointed that she should hand the shamrocks to the Liberator. Show her how to mount the bramble," said he. "Then let us be off on the minute."

They brought Kate Mary Ellen a bramble off a bush, and they put a dock leaf on it for a side saddle; the Commander stamped his foot; they were clear of the *rath* and they were galloping, galloping all in a minute. Kate Mary Ellen found that the bramble under her had become a horse, a little horse, but one that went with a great speed. "We mustn't come up to the Hill," said the second of the fairies, "for the crowds of

the world are sure to be on Tara to-day. We'll get off at the back of the Hill and come over quietly."

A minute after he had said that they came down on a little field. "And now," said the second in command, "we'll pretend that we're huntsmen, and we'll ride up quietly. The crowds of the world will be there, but we'll keep on the outside of them."

They rode quietly through fields, and then they came up on the Hill of Tara. There were no crowds there. All that was before them was a wide grassy place. There was neither person nor sign of a person no matter where they looked.

"We're late for the meeting," said one of the fairies.

"We're a day late for it," said another.

"We're a year late for the meeting," said a third of them.

"You're sixty years late for it," said Kate Mary Ellen, speaking up to them.

Then they all turned to the one who was second in command. "You're to blame for this," said the Commander, speaking very severely.

The second in command went down upon his knees. "My lord," said he, lifting up his hand, "don't blame me. Only this morning I was given notice of the meeting."

"Who is the Timekeeper?" asked the Commander.

"Clourie Cam," said they all.

"It is no wonder," said the Commander, "that above ground and below ground affairs are in the state they are in. Mount horses. Mount horses, I say, and make no stop or stay until we strike hoofs on our own courtyard."

They mounted horses then, Kate Mary Ellen mounting on her fiery little brown steed. They rode on and the wind of March that was behind them did not catch up on them, and the wind of March that was before them they caught up on. In a minute they were back upon the *rath.* No sooner did they strike hoofs on it than the ground opened. They went down, leaving their horses behind them. Kate Mary Ellen went down with them.

It seemed to Kate Mary Ellen that they came into a forge or a workshop of some sort. There was some one there, and she thought he looked at them with the top of his head. But that was because his head was bent down and it was bald and smooth like a goose's egg. When he lifted his face she saw that there was a beard growing all round it. He was a little old fellow; he sat on a stool and his legs were twisted like the stems of hawthorn trees. She did not see his hands because they were behind his beard.

The Commander turned to his second. "When you took that man into your service, did you know what age he was?" said he.

"I thought I did, my lord," said the second in command.

"Well, whatever age he told you he was, be sure he is a thousand years older than that same. How could he keep time when he is so old and so slowed down? It's no wonder our time has gone wrong and that we're sixty years slow in our reckoning. This very day appoint some one else to be our Timekeeper."

"I will, my lord," said the second in command.

Then the Commander looked at Kate Mary Ellen. "What will I do with the shamrocks you gave me?" said she to him.

"I'll tell you what you can do with them," said the Commander. "Dip them in the well just under the *rath* and they'll be made everlasting. I found you serviceable and agreeable," said he to her, "and I'm going to do what I can for you. You'll find your cow in the nook; she has been safe and well watched over by the fairies. You can go home or stay on the road, as it pleases yourself.

"Now listen to my last words to you. On the Saint Patrick's Day that the cherry tree before your door blossoms—it hasn't blossomed for long, but it will blossom and on Saint Patrick's Day—

well, then take the shamrocks that have been made everlasting and give the bunch to a young man you'll see going by the place where you waited. He'll like you and you'll like him, and the two of you will be happy together. Tell him, too, that the fairies of Ireland won't go against him. And you'll get more than that for your service to us: the next time you're at the well in the pasture field, lift up the flagstone," said he, "and you'll find there a little pan of gold."

He was taking her up to the top of the mound as he said that. When she came out on it there were no horses there—only brambles and plucked dock leaves. But the next day she went and got the little pan of gold from under the flagstone at the well. And it's my belief that the day will come when Kate Mary Ellen will take the bunch of everlasting shamrocks that she has kept, and will find a young man to give them to.

*"A Boy in Eirinn," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Jack Yeats. E. P. Dutton & Co., 1913.*

# THE KING OF THE BIRDS

The thirteen little wrens sat on the wall of the apple yard: their mother was near them; she was there to teach them to fly. One called them the little wrens, but really each one was as big as their mother. She had a tail, however, that was most cunningly cocked and they had no tails, and the consequence was that when they made their little flights they always went sideways. And they were so young that their beaks were still yellow, and wide, and open.

"All I ask of you," said their mother, "is that when you go into the world you remember that you are the children of the King of the Birds."

"Now why does our mother call us the children of the King of the Birds?" said the thirteenth little wren to his brothers and sisters. "I think we're really very small. And I think our mother is very small. And there is our father behind that ivy leaf, and he's very small, too."

"And wherever you go through the wide world be sure to conduct yourselves like the children of the King of the Birds," said their mother when she flew back to them.

"It's because we have been reared in such a

fine nest," said one of the little wrens to the other. "No other birds in the world have had a finer nest than we. That's the reason we're called the children of the King of the Birds."

"Men call the wren the King of the Birds," said their father, flying up to them, "and surely men ought to know who is the King of the Birds."

"Why do men call the wren the King of the Birds?" said all the little wrens as they looked up at their father and mother.

"Tell them," said the mother wren to the father wren.

"Tell them, you," said the father wren to the mother wren.

"Tell us," said the thirteen little wrens.

"I will tell you," said the mother wren. "I will tell you why men honor the wren by calling him the King of the Birds."

She spent the whole day telling them, and this is the story she told:

The King of the hither side of the mountain conquered the two villages of Half a Loaf and Windy Gap, and the very day he conquered them he sent for the Headman of each village, and the two of them came before him. "You two Headmen," said the King, "are to see that your villages, Half a Loaf and Windy Gap, send me my rightful tribute."

"There isn't much we can send you, my Lord," said the Headman of Half a Loaf.

"A string of salmon," said the Headman of Windy Gap.

"A basket of plover's eggs," said the Headman of Half a Loaf.

"No," said the King, "the tribute that each of your villages must send me is the King of the Birds."

After that the Headmen went back to their villages. That very day each of them told the council what tribute the King had ordered them to send. "The King of the Birds," said the people of Half a Loaf. "That's the eagle, surely." "The King of the Birds," said the people of Windy Gap. "What bird might that be? We'll have to give thought to this."

This was the sort that the two villages were: The people of Windy Gap would think about a thing, and think about it, and think about it; they were the sort of people who never said, "Do it now." And the people of Half a Loaf were the sort who made up their minds at once. "The King of the Birds," said they. "There's no doubt at all about it—the eagle is the King of the Birds." And while the people of Windy Gap were thinking and pondering, and pondering and thinking, the people of Half a Loaf were sending their young men off to catch an eagle.

But an eagle is a hard bird to catch, and the people of Half a Loaf found that they had to send all of their young men out and send them out every day and all day. The young men climbed high hills and went across stony ditches; they searched in the east and they hunted in the west; they went out at sunrise and they came back at sunset, but never an eagle did they bring back with them.

And all the time the people of Windy Gap were thinking and pondering and pondering and thinking. "It may be that the eagle is the King of the Birds," they said, "but maybe he's not, and we had better consider it."

They thought about it from sunrise to sunset; they thought about it while they plowed their fields and sowed them, while they spun their cloth and made their garments, while they mended their nets and mended their shoes, while they thatched their roofs and planted their apple trees. "It may be that the eagle is King of the Birds," they said to each other when they met on the wayside, "but we had better consider it."

But in Half a Loaf there were few left to plow the fields and sow them, few left to spin cloth and make garments, few left to mend nets and mend shoes, few left to thatch roofs and plant apple trees—there were few left to do these things, for

all the young men were out on the mountain, hunting for an eagle.

"The people of Windy Gap will be ruined," said the people of Half a Loaf, "they have done nothing yet to catch the eagle. When the King gets no tribute from them he'll come over and he'll sell them and their village to the Saracens. Call the young men back who have gone into the fields to work, and send them up the mountain again."

At last the people of Half a Loaf caught their eagle—a great golden eagle it was. They built a shed for him and they fed to him all the lambs they had had that year.

"We're safe, anyway," said the people of Half a Loaf, "but the unfortunate folk of Windy Gap have lost their chance. They'll have no time to catch an eagle now."

The time came when the two villages had to send their tribute to the King.

"We have our eagle," said the people of Half a Loaf, "but, oh, bad fortune! We have hardly a crop growing. This will be a hard year for us —we haven't lambs to grow into sheep, even."

"We have our crops," said the people of Windy Gap, "but, bad cess to it! What are we to do about paying our tribute to the King?"

What were they to do, the people of Windy Gap? They were still thinking and pondering,

and pondering and thinking, but they couldn't decide whether the eagle or the cuckoo, the goose or the woodpecker, was King of the Birds. And there were the King's bailiffs at their Headman's door! Just as he was being marched off he put his hand under the thatch of the house. It was a low house, and maybe he put his hand under its thatch to give good-by to the place. Well, anyway, he put his hand under the thatch of the house, and in the very place he put his hand there was a wren taking shelter from the wind. The hand of the Headman went upon the wren; he took the wren out of its shelter. He put the wren under his hat and he went off with the King's bailiff.

And there, going before him on the way to the King's castle, was the Headman of Half a Loaf. The riders of the village were with him and they were bearing their golden eagle most triumphantly.

"Give to my Royal Falconer the King of the Birds," said the King to the pair of them.

The Headman of Half a Loaf presented the eagle. "It is well," said the King, "and where have you," said he to the Headman of Windy Gap, "bestowed the King of the Birds?"

The Headman put his hand under his hat and handed over the wren to the King's Falconer.

"Tush," said the King, "why do you call this

the King of the Birds?" The Headman of Windy Gap was going to say, "Because his family is great." But instead he said, "Because he flies highest, my Lord."

"If that be a truth, it's a truth that's unknown to me," said the King. "But it shall be tried out."

Then he said to the Royal Falconer, "Let the eagle and the wren soar together. And when the eagle outsoars the wren it shall be proved that the Headman of Windy Gap is a caitiff, and his village and every one in it will be sold to the Saracens. But if it so happens that the wren outsoars the eagle, the tribute sent from the village of Windy Gap must be accepted."

So the eagle and the wren were put upon the same perch and they soared up together. Up and up the eagle went. "So far my father went, but I shall go farther," said the eagle. (*Here the story-teller stretches his hand out on a level with his shoulder.*) Higher and higher the eagle rose. "So far my grandfather went, but I shall go farther." (*Here the story-teller raises his hand as high as his head.*) Farther and farther he soared. "So far went my great-grandfather, and no eagle again will fly so high." (*Here the story-teller raises his hand as high as he can.*) His wings were now stiff and tired. "No bird will ever outsoar this flight of mine," said the eagle.

He went to close his wings so that he might rest them as he went down. As he did, the wren came from under his wings.

Up and up and still farther up went the wren. He had been resting while the eagle had been soaring, and now he was able to soar past the point that the eagle had reached at his best.

The eagle flew down and lighted on the Falconer's perch. "Has he flown high, Falconer?" asked the King. "No bird has ever flown so high," said the Falconer. "By the rime on his wings I know he has gone into the region of the frost."

"The eagle is King of the Birds, and no one can deny it," said the King. "This is my lawful tribute. But the village of Windy Gap has not sent me my lawful tribute."

"Mercy," said the Headman of Windy Gap.

"The village and all in it shall be sold to the Saracens," said the King.

Just then the wren came down and lighted on the perch beside the eagle. "Where has the wren flown to?" asked the King. "By my glove," said the Royal Falconer, "he soared past the line of the frost, and he went into the line of the snow—I know it, for what's on his feathers is a drop of snow."

"The wren is King of the Birds," said the Headman of Windy Gap.

"Yes, King of the Birds," said the King, "and therefore my lawful tribute."

And from that day, and forever after, the villages in the land sent to the King not an eagle, but a wren for his tribute. And in no village ever after were the lands unplowed and the fields unsown, the cloth unspun and the garments not made, the roofs unthatched and the apple trees unplanted. And in every village in the hollow and on the height the people shouted for the wren: "The wren, the wren, the King of all Birds."

*"The Boy Who Knew What the Birds Said," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Dugald Walker. The Macmillan Company, 1918.*

# THE BOY PU-NIA

## AND THE KING OF THE SHARKS

The name of the King of the Sharks was Kai-ale-ale. He lived near a cave that was filled with lobsters. And on account of Kai-ale-ale and the ten sharks he had under him, no one dared to dive down, and go into the cave, and take lobsters out of it. The sharks stayed around the cave night and day, and if a diver ventured near they would bite him and devour him.

There was a boy named Pu-nia. His father had been killed by the sharks. Now, after his father had been killed, there was no one to catch fish for Pu-nia and his mother; they had sweet potatoes

to eat, but they never had any fish to eat with them. Often Pu-nia heard his mother say that she wished she had a fish or a lobster to eat with the sweet potatoes. And then the time came when Pu-nia made up his mind that he and his mother would have lobsters to eat.

He came above the cave where the lobsters were. Looking down into the water he saw the sharks—Kai-ale-ale and his ten sharks. They were all asleep. While he was watching them they wakened up. Pu-nia pretended that he did not know they had awakened. He spoke loudly so that they would hear him, and he said: "Here am I, Pu-nia, and I am going into the cave to get lobsters for myself and my mother. That great shark, Kai-ale-ale, is asleep now, and I can dive to the point over there, and then go into the cave; I will take two lobsters in my hands, and my mother and I will have something to eat with our sweet potatoes." So Pu-nia said, speaking loudly and pretending that he thought the sharks were still asleep.

Said Kai-ale-ale, speaking softly to the other sharks: "Let us rush to the place where Pu-nia dives, and let us devour him as we devoured his father." But Pu-nia was a very cunning boy and not at all the sort that would let himself be caught by the stupid sharks. He had a stone in his hand while he was speaking, and he flung it toward the

point that he said he was going to dive to. Just as soon as the stone struck the water the sharks made a rush to the place, leaving the cave of the lobsters unguarded. Then Pu-nia dived. He went into the cave, took two lobsters in his hands, and came up out of the water.

And then, from the place he had spoken from before, he shouted down to the sharks: "Here is Pu-nia, and he has come back safely. He has two lobsters, and he and his mother have something to live on. It was the first shark, the second shark, the third shark, the fourth shark, the fifth shark, the sixth shark, the seventh shark, the eighth shark, the ninth shark, the tenth shark—it was the tenth shark, the one with the thin tail, that showed Pu-nia what to do."

When the King of the Sharks, Kai-ale-ale, heard this from Pu-nia, he ordered all the sharks to come together and stay in a row. He counted them, and there were ten of them, and the tenth one had a thin tail. "So it was you, Thin Tail," he said, "that told the boy Pu-nia what to do. You shall die." And then, according to the orders that the King of the Sharks gave, the thin-tailed shark was killed. Pu-nia called out to them, "You have killed one of your own kind." With the two lobsters in his hands the boy went back to his mother's.

Pu-nia and his mother now had something to

eat with their sweet potatoes. The lobsters were eaten. Then Pu-nia went back to the place above the cave. He called out, just as he had done the first time: "I can dive to the place over there and then slip into the cave, for Kai-ale-ale and his sharks are all asleep; I can get two lobsters for myself and my mother, so that we'll have something to eat with our sweet potatoes." Then, as before, he threw down a stone and made ready to dive to another point.

When the stone struck the water the sharks rushed over, leaving the cave unguarded. Then Pu-nia dived down and went into the cave. He took two lobsters in his hands and got back to the top of the water. He shouted down to the sharks from the place he had stood in before: "It was the first shark, the second shark, the third shark, the fourth shark, the fifth shark, the sixth shark, the seventh shark, the eighth shark, the ninth shark —it was the ninth shark, the one with the big stomach, that told Pu-nia what to do."

Then the King of the Sharks, Kai-ale-ale, ordered the sharks to get into a line. He counted them, and he found that the ninth shark had a big stomach. "So it was you who told Pu-nia what to do," he said; and he ordered the big-stomached shark to be killed. After that Pu-nia went home with his two lobsters, and he and his mother had something to eat with their sweet potatoes.

The boy Pu-nia continued to do this. He would deceive the sharks by throwing a stone to the place that he said he was going to dive to; when he got the sharks away from the cave they were guarding, he would dive down, slip in, and take two lobsters in his hands. And always when he got to the top of the water, he would name a shark. "The first shark, the second shark, the third shark —the shark with the little eye, the shark with the gray spot on him—told Pu-nia what to do," he would say; and each time he would get one of the sharks killed. He kept on doing this until only one of the sharks was left; this one was Kai-ale-ale, the King of the Sharks.

And now he had got killed ten of the sharks that had killed his father. He wanted to do something against Kai-ale-ale, the King of the Sharks. He went into the forest; he hewed out two hard pieces of wood, each about a yard long; then he took sticks for kindling a fire—the au-li-ma to rub with, and the au-na-ki to rub on; he got charcoal to burn as a fire, and he got food. All these things he put into a bag, and he carried the bag down to the beach. He came above the cave that Kai-ale-ale guarded, and he said, speaking in a loud voice: "If I dive now, and if Kai-ale-ale bites me, my blood will come to the top of the water, and my mother will see the blood and will bring me back to life again. But if I dive down and Kai-ale-ale

takes me into his mouth whole, I shall die and never come back to life again." Kai-ale-ale was listening, of course. He said to himself: "No, I will not bite you, you cunning boy; I will take you into my mouth and swallow you whole, and then you will never come back to life again. I shall open my mouth wide enough to take you in. Yes, indeed, this time I will get you."

Pu-nia dived, holding his bag. Kai-ale-ale opened his mouth wide and got Pu-nia into it. But as soon as the boy got within, he opened his bag and took out the two pieces of wood which he had hewn out in the forest. He put them between the jaws of the shark so that Kai-ale-ale was not able to close his jaws. With his mouth held open, Kai-ale-ale went dashing through the water.

Pu-nia was now inside the big shark; he took the fire sticks out of his bag and rubbed them together, making a fire. He kindled the charcoal that he had brought, and he cooked his food at the fire he had made. With the fire inside of him, the shark could not keep still; he went dashing here and there through the ocean.

At last the shark came near the island of Hawaii. "If he brings me near the breakers, I am saved," said Pu-nia, speaking aloud; "but if he takes me to the sand near where the grass grows, I shall die; I cannot be saved." Kai-ale-ale, when he heard Pu-nia say this, said to himself, "I will

not take him near the breakers; I will take him where the dry sand is, near the grass." Saying this, he dashed in from the ocean and up to where the shrubs grew on the shore. No shark had ever gone there before; and when Kai-ale-ale got there, he could not get back again.

Then Pu-nia came out of the shark. He shouted out, "Kai-ale-ale, Kai-ale-ale, the King of the Sharks, has come to visit us." And the people, hearing about their enemy, Kai-ale-ale, came down to the shore with their spears and their knives, and they killed him. And that was the end of the ugly and wicked King of the Sharks.

Every day after that, Pu-nia was able to go down into the cave and get lobsters for himself and his mother. And the people all rejoiced when they knew that the eleven sharks that guarded the cave had been got rid of by the boy Pu-nia.

*"At the Gateways of the Day," by Padraic Colum. The Yale University Press, 1924.*

# THE LOST CITY OF YS

In a place where the sea is now there was a wide plain once, and on that plain the city of Ys was built. The sea's level was above the plain on which the city stood, and the sea was held off from the city by a long wall. Always the people of Ys could hear the sea as it beat against the wall. But they were not made fearful by the beating of the waves of the sea: their fathers had fought off the sea, and the wall that had been built by them would hold it off always. Sometimes, when it could flood only part of their plain, the people of the city would open the great gate that was in the wall and let the sea flow in to lay its weeds and its salt upon their meadows.

The people of Ys could look out upon the sea: there was the high tower that had been built by the King beside his palace, and when one mounted upon it, one could see whether the sea was high or low, and count the ships that were upon it. The one who went oftenest up into the tower was Dahut, the King's daughter.

As for the King, he did not know what his daughter did or how she lived. King Gradlon's beard was long; he read in deep books, and he

slept long and deep in the night. And Dahut, his daughter, had golden eyes with no eyebrows above them, and a neck that was white and soft and throbbing, and red lips and little feet. She went softly through the ways of the palace, and she went softly up the stairs of the tower. Her father and the people of the city said, "Dahut is this, and Dahut is that," but none knew what Dahut was except those who saw her feasting on the rare fruits and the strange wines she had brought to her, or who saw her dancing at night.

Sometimes, after she had danced with a young man, she would take him to the top of the tower, and she would make him promise that he would do some dangerous thing for her. Under the spell of her golden eyes this young man or that young man would make a promise, but afterward they would go through the city like men who had lost their hope. Then they would leave the city, these young men whom Dahut had danced with, and be seen no more in Ys. It was from what they muttered as they went about the city that the people got the thought that Dahut hated Ys, her father's city. After a while they said no more, "Dahut is this, and Dahut is that." Now they said, "None know Dahut except those who have danced with her in the night. Would that the King would look upon Dahut and judge her and restrain her." But her father, his beard spread

out on his knees, read in his deep book while she feasted, or, with the silver key of the sea gate around his neck, slept upon his purple bed while she danced in the palace, or climbed the stairway to the tower.

Sometimes those who watched her climb up into that tower would say of Dahut, "Her mother was a Woman of the Sea. The King took her from where he had found her seated on the rocks by the sea. And in this tower the King kept that Woman of the Sea shut in; he had no pity on her although she was often heard crying in the tower —crying, the people used to say, for her home in the sea. No wonder Dahut is different from all other maidens, and no wonder at all if she seems to hate her father's city and us who are in it. But Dahut's mother died before Dahut could know her, and she died in that tower; to the top of it she would climb to look out upon the sea."

There came a young man into Ys from a foreign land. Dahut pretended not to look upon him as he spoke to her father. She made a sign with her hand to him, and she brought him to her feast. Galor was this young man's name. They danced together. They feasted, and then boldly they entered the chamber where the King slept upon his purple bed, the silver key of the sea gate hanging from around his neck. "Take the key," the

young man said to Dahut. She took the silver key that was hanging around her father's neck. "Open now the sea gate that is in the long wall."

To the young men whom she had danced with before Dahut had said, "Open the sea gate," and they had promised to do so, and then had become fearful and despairing on account of what they had promised to do. But this young man bade her take the key herself and open the gate. "Now let me make him forget what he has asked me to do," she said to herself. They danced, and the servants in the palace who saw them dance cried out, "Dahut is accursed, accursed," and they crowded around where the King slept upon his purple bed, and they wakened him out of his sleep. Down the stairway came the King, his great beard shaking up and down his chest. Dahut and Galor ran out and away from the palace. The young man lifted her up and carried her through the long meadows and down to the wall that was built against the sea.

"Open, you, the gate," he said to her, and she put the silver key that had always been hanging from her father's neck into the lock of the high gate. "I wanted another to do this," she said, "I wanted to make a man do a deed that would leave him fearful." She unlocked the gate. "I wanted the sea, that my mother cried to go back to, to come in upon my father's city."

They heard the crying of the sea birds beyond

the wall. The sea began to push at the opened gate. Soon the waves pushed the gate wide. A sea bird flying through the open gate lighted on the grass of the plain of Ys in the first light of the morning. "Beware if ever you go from me now," said Dahut to Galor. "Beware if ever you come to me again," said Galor to Dahut. He flung her against the wall, and he went away.

She went within the palace; she heard the bells of Ys peal in alarm. Her father came to her, carrying under his arm the great book he had been reading. He took her without, and he mounted upon the horse that was the swiftest in his stables. Dahut mounted behind him. The people cried to their King to gallop swiftly until he came to a place that the sea might not come to, and take possession of that place for the building of a new city. They cried to him while they stayed behind, mounting high upon the rocks.

So Gradlon with Dahut behind him galloped on and on, the sea flowing upon them as they rode on. The sea dashed upon the heels of the horse; it flowed before them as they rode, and the horse splashed and plunged in the waves of the sea. And then a voice came to Gradlon telling him that he would have to throw behind him the thing that he held dearest, so that the sea taking it might flow no farther. Then Gradlon threw behind him the great book that he carried. Still the sea

flowed on, and the horse splashed deeper and plunged deeper in the waves. The voice came again, telling Gradlon that he would have to throw behind him the thing that he held dearest. Then he threw from the horse his daughter, Princess Dahut. The waves flowed over her, and then the waves ceased to flow; the sea drew away from that place. And there Gradlon halted and took possession of that place for the new city that his people would build.

They came to him, leaving the high rocks, and soon they began to build the new city. Over the place where the city of Ys was the sea now flows. And now and again the people of the new city hear the bells ring in lost Ys that is beneath the waves.

*"The Forge in the Forest," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Boris Artzybasheff. The Macmillan Company, 1925.*

# GOLDEN HOOD

There was once a maiden whose name was Golden Hood, and there was a young man whose name was Valentine, and Valentine was the Emperor's son. Now Golden Hood had to go through a forest; Valentine was to have gone with her to save her from the dangers of the way, and especially to save her from the dangers that were all around the place where a Witch had her house. They did not know where the Witch's house was and they might not know it even if they came to it. But the Witch's house was on the fringe of the forest, and there was danger to Golden Hood if she came to it. Valentine lost Golden Hood, and Golden Hood lost Valentine, and the maiden all alone came to the edge of the forest.

Golden Hood came to a space that had been green and that now was dry. In the middle of that space there was a tree that was all bare and broken. Golden Hood stayed beside it, and as she did she heard a voice from the tree saying, "Tend me, oh, tend me, living one!"

She stayed under the tree, and again she heard the voice of the tree and it said, "Tend me, oh, tend me, living one!"

"I will tend you, tree!" said Golden Hood.

She found a gourd, and she filled it with water and brought it back to the tree. She touched its broken branches with her hands, and she brought more and more water to it.

And near the tree she stayed, and she hoped that Valentine would come to the place and find her there. In the mornings she would go to the well; she would eat the berries that grew there, and she would bring water back in a gourd, and she would water and tend the tree. The tree became less and less withered; its dead branches fell away, and although it was still leafless it began to have the look of a sound tree.

And often Golden Hood looked at herself in the well. Her dark hair became longer and finer; her lips became redder, and her eyes became more and more shining. So lovely was the image that she saw that she could not help but smile down as it showed itself in the well.

But still Valentine did not find her where she stayed. The moons in the night changed as the days and nights went by; still Golden Hood tended the tree. A bud came here and a bud came there on the tree. The buds swelled into leaves and the whole tree became green and joyous. A first white blossom came. The tree swayed its branches so that the blossom fell and touched Golden Hood on the lips where she lay below.

She sat up, her hands in her lap and her golden hood fallen on her shoulders. She thanked the tree for giving her its first blossom. And as she sat there she saw one coming toward her, and it seemed to her that this was Valentine and that he was coming to her at last.

And then two great shadows came over her. A shadowy thing swept down, and there was a whirring all round her. And then Golden Hood felt herself caught up and lifted and carried away.

For two great eagles had flown down, and one caught Golden Hood and the other caught Golden Hood, and they flew up in the air with the maiden between them. Up, up, and away from the green tree they flew with her, and over a valley that was filled with stones. Their wings were spread out, and between the eagles, with an arm round each, was Golden Hood. The maiden could not but feel light and happy as she was borne along, her arm around the neck of each.

With whirring wings they swept toward the Dark Mountains; then on toward the high middle peak they flew. Over the peak of the mountain they circled; their nest was there. Around it and around it they circled, and then they went down and into the nest.

High and deep and wide was the nest of the eagles. All the treasures of the world were in it.

When they let her down she rested upon the Golden Fleece that the heroes had brought back from Greece. They gave her, to put on one of her feet, the Golden Slipper that the eagle had carried off from Rhodope. They gave her, to put around her neck, the Golden Necklace that the Giant Women had given Freya the Goddess. The Golden Apples that the Golden Bird had carried off from the Golden Tree were there, and the Golden Egg that the Golden Goose had laid.

The nest was hooped all around with iron hoops, and it had seven doors of iron. The doors were tightly shut; they could be opened only from the inside, and there was a window over each door. Looking out through the seven windows one could see the seven sides of the world.

In a corner of the nest a fire of spicewood was burning. Over it was a caldron. Out of the caldron a vapor went, that, mounting up at first very thinly, made the clouds in the sky. The eagles, Golden Hood found out, were very careful of this fire. They gave a stool to her, and they told her to sit beside the fire and keep the spicewood upon it, so that the caldron might boil and the vapor from the caldron might keep mounting up. They showed her the chest where they kept their food. It had a heavy lid, and Golden Hood had to use all her strength to raise it. The world's

nicest food was in that chest, and the eagles sat on the rim of the nest to watch her eat of it.

They told her they were going to fetch her a ring to go on her little finger—a ring cut out of a single diamond. Then they flew from off the rim of the nest. Golden Hood had just put the spice-wood upon the fire, and now she stood upon the stool and watched out through one of the windows. She saw the eagles sweeping away. They flew swiftly out of sight; the maiden was left with nothing near her; all alone in the high, iron-hooped nest was she, within the seven doors that were tightly closed.

She took the stool from beside the fire and she stood up on it and looked out through the first window. When she looked through that window she saw all the forests of the world; green birds were in the branches, and monkeys of all sorts were in the trees: for long and long did Golden Hood look out through that window.

She looked out through the second window and she saw all the seas of the world: ships were sailing here and there and dolphins were sporting on the waves; she saw the flying fishes flying and she saw the great whales spouting, and she saw the branches of red coral in the green sea: for long and long did Golden Hood look out through the second window.

Then she looked out through the third window.

She saw all the deserts of the world; hard and gleaming were the deserts; she saw little gazelles race swiftly across them; she saw the dragons come out of their dens, and she saw the ostriches standing there with their heads buried in the sand: for long and long did Golden Hood look out through the third window.

She thought she had been at each window only for a moment of time, but she had been at each for longer than she thought. She took the stool and stood upon it and looked out through the fourth window. She saw all the plains and prairies and pampas and savannas of the world; she saw them covered with green grass and blue grass and brown grass; she saw wild horses with flowing manes and tails galloping across, and she saw clouds of little birds coming down to eat the seeds of the grasses.

Then she looked out through the fifth window and she saw the snowy places of the world: she saw the reindeer scraping away the snow with their hoofs; she saw the big bear climbing up the stair of an iceberg; she saw the white foxes sitting in a circle, talking to each other, and she saw the snow goose scrape a hole in the snow and make a nest for her eggs.

She looked out through the sixth window wondering what she might see. What she saw was worth long looking at. She saw all the gardens

of the world, with flowering trees that marched away and bushes of roses that rushed at her, with beds of white lilies each having a golden star in its cup, with blue morning-glories and blue Canterbury bells and blue smock flowers, with dim moon flowers, and with exalted sunflowers that lifted up their heads like golden clocks.

Then Golden Hood stood upon the stool and she looked out through the seventh window. She saw a bare tree with a raven on the top of it; she saw a black house with smoke coming out of it; she saw a bent old woman sitting under a tree.

Was that house, she wondered, the house of the Witch, and was the old woman sitting there the Witch herself?

Then seeing the smoke coming out of the house, Golden Hood thought of the fire that she had to tend. She jumped off the stool and came to it. The fire was out and there was nothing but gray ashes on the hearth, and no vapor came out of the caldron that was over the fire.

Oh, what was she to do? For seven hours she had been looking out through the seven windows, not knowing how time was passing, and now the fire that she had been set to watch was out, and she had no way of lighting it again! But now she thought of the smoke she had seen coming out of the black house. She would go to it—it could not be the Witch's house—and get some coals of fire

and bring them back, and light the fire under the caldron.

So she opened the seventh door and went out of the eagles' nest. She went down toward the black house that was beside the bare tree. It was farther away than she had thought, and she was hours and hours in coming to it.

The bent old woman was not before the house. Golden Hood peeped in and saw her. She was looking into a glass, and "Come in," she said. When the maiden stepped past the door the hag came up to her and took her by the wrist.

"You are cold, cold, girl," she said.

"Oh, no, I am not cold," said Golden Hood.

"You'll have to stay for a while," said the hag.

"But I don't like the creaking of the bare tree outside, nor the flapping of the raven's wings."

"All the same you will have to stay here until I warm you."

"But you cannot warm me, bent old woman."

"What have you come to me for, then?"

"For a coal of fire."

"I'll give you two coals of fire if you wait until the coals are red."

"I will wait, then," said Golden Hood.

She stayed, waiting for the coals to become red. But when they were near becoming red the hag would strike them with her iron tongs, saying

that she wanted to stir them to a better glow, and then the coals would lose what redness they had.

Once she went to look into her glass. Then Golden Hood seized two glowing coals and she put them into a pot, and she ran out of the door, carrying the pot with her.

The hag screamed after her.

But Golden Hood ran on and on. She was a long time coming from the eagles' nest to the black house, and she was a long time going from the black house back to the eagles' nest. When she was halfway back the hag's son came into his mother's house.

"Why did you not hurry back?" said the hag to him. "The maiden was here who is as white as snow, and as black as the raven's wing, and as red as red berries. Why were you not back? I tried to keep her, but she went away from me and she is halfway back ere this."

When her son heard this he put on his iron shoes and he went following after Golden Hood. He went very swiftly, and it was not long before she heard him coming behind her.

She ran and ran, and she was at the eagles' nest when she felt his breath behind her. She pushed at the seventh door and went in. And then she closed the seventh door, and she fastened it tightly behind her.

The hag's son came to the door. He tried to

push it open, but the iron door would not open for him. He put his fingers through the crack, and Golden Hood saw his long nails sticking through. Then he knew he could not get in; he went away, and Golden Hood heard the clatter of his iron shoes as he went back and toward the black house that was beside the bare tree.

Golden Hood made the fire light up again. She put spicewood upon it, and the vapor came out of the caldron again. She sat on the stool beside the fire and she tended it while she waited for the eagles to come back again.

For a long time she sat by the fire, and then she went from the stool and to the seventh door. She wanted to see how tightly it was shut, and she put her hand against the crack. The nail the hag's son had put through was sticking there, and the long nail went into the palm of her hand.

Then Golden Hood fell down on the floor of the eagles' nest. She lay there with her red lips parted and her forehead all white and the black tresses of her hair falling around her. She lay there with the sky above her, and the treasures of the world all about her, and the seven iron doors closed upon her, while the eagles, flying, flying on, had not yet come to the shoulder of the world—the shoulder they would have to fly over to come to the place where they would get for her finger

the ring that was cut out of a single diamond. So the sleeping maiden lay.

But Valentine, the Emperor's son, had seen the eagles fly away with Golden Hood. And now he went seeking the place they had taken her to. He crossed the Valley of Stones, and he came to the black house that was beside the bare tree.

He climbed the bare tree so that he might look over to the mountain. As he did, the raven flapped and screeched in the branches; the hag's son came out of the black house; he had an ax in his hands. Seeing the youth in the tree he began to hack and cut with his sharp, heavy ax; the tree swayed where Valentine climbed, and the raven screeched and flapped around him. Still he went climbing the tree, for he knew that from the treetop, if he could reach it, he could see where the eagles had their nest.

The tree swayed and swayed beneath the strokes of the ax, but still Valentine went on and up. Hanging his sword around his neck he reached the top of the tree. He looked from the top and he saw the eagles' nest on the peak of the mountain; he saw the iron doors and the iron hoops that hooped it round. Then Valentine slid down the tree and stood on the ground before the hag's son.

The hag's son raised his ax in his long arms, and he rushed at Valentine. But the youth had

his good bright sword in his hand, and he struck at the hag's son. And the hag, coming out of the black house, began flinging stones at him; first, she threw the pebbles that tiled the roof of her house and then she threw the stones that made the walls of it; it was wonderful to see how quickly the roof went, and then one wall and another wall. Valentine was bruised all over from the blows of the stones. And all the time the hag's son kept striking at him. His long arms brought the edge of the ax near the youth's flesh, making a wound again and again. But at last Valentine struck him with his sword. From that time the hag's son began to get smaller and smaller, and the time came when Valentine saw before him only a cross-tempered, black dwarf.

When he had shrunk so that he was below him Valentine threw him down and threw the tree across him. And the hag, seeing her son laid on the ground, gave a scream and fled away, and the raven went from the broken tree and went flapping after her.

And then Valentine, the Emperor's son, went to the eagles' nest. The journey was long, but he came to the end of it at last. He saw the seven doors of iron, and, one after the other, he tried to open them. None would open for all his effort. And the nest was too high and too smooth for him to climb to the rim.

He called "Golden Hood, Golden Hood," but no sign came from within the nest; he listened, and there was no stir within. No matter how he did it he would have to climb, he thought, over the rim of the nest.

With his sharp sword he began to hack out steps; he climbed up the steps he had made. He came to the rim of the nest, and he looked over it.

There was Golden Hood, and she was sleeping. She was lying on the Fleece of Gold, and beside her were the Golden Apples that the Golden Bird had carried off the Golden Tree, and the Golden Slipper that the eagle had carried off from Rhodope, and the Golden Egg that the Golden Goose had laid. Golden Hood was sleeping and her dark lashes spread under her pale eyelids, and her dark tresses curled over her white forehead, and her red lips were opened to the snowdrops of her teeth.

He stooped over her; he lifted her hands, and in the palm of one of her hands he saw a nail sticking. He drew it out; it was a nail from the finger of the hag's son. As Valentine drew it out of the palm of her hand a flush came into her face and a breath went through her body. He lifted her up and her eyes opened. He kissed her on the mouth and all the gladness of life came back to her. "Golden Hood, Golden Hood," he said, "will you come with me?"

Softly she said, "Once you were going to speak to me, and I thought your words would be like something that one would hear when one is playing, or dancing, or singing. But now I think that your words will be like birds that I would clasp to me. I will go with you, Valentine."

So they opened the door from the inside and they went out. With hand clasped in hand they went through the Valley of Stones. The hag's house was no longer there; pebble and stone, it was all gone. The tree still stood, but instead of the raven there were now two doves in its branches and they were building a nest.

*"The Children Who Followed the Piper," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Dugald Walker. The Macmillan Company, 1923.*

# THE STORY OF ACHILLES

## HOW ACHILLES STAYED OUT OF THE BATTLE

Achilles stood by his ship that was drawn up on the beach; his famous fighting men stood around him, and he watched the battle as it went this way and that way. Many a Greek warrior, as he was beaten back, cried out to him, "Achilles, Achilles," but Achilles, the best of the Greek heroes, was not moved at all by the destruction that was being wrought upon the Greeks. His heart within him was hard against them all. Agamemnon, the leader of the Greeks, had taken away from him the maiden whom he cherished,

Briseis of the Fair Cheeks, and had led her to his own tent. And because of that Achilles had sworn that no matter what defeat Hector, the great leader of the Trojans, might inflict upon the Greeks, he would give them no help at all. "I swear that longing for Achilles's aid shall come upon the host of Agamemnon," he had said, "but no Achilles shall come to their help. I swear that I shall let Hector triumph over them." Now, as he stood upon the beach and watched the battle, his heart was set upon bringing his ships down into the sea and sailing back to his own country with his fighting men and with his dear friend Patroklos.

As he stood by his ship he saw a chariot with a wounded man in it go by—a chariot driven by an old warrior named Nestor. Then Achilles spoke to Patroklos, who was standing by him, and he said, "Go now, dear friend, and ask of Nestor who it is that he has borne away from the battle."

Patroklos went and stood by the door of old Nestor's hut. "Achilles sent me to you, revered Nestor," he said, "to ask whom you have borne out of the battle."

"Why should Achilles concern himself about those who are wounded in the fight with Hector?" said old Nestor. "He does not care at all what befalls the Greeks. Ah, but Achilles will have cause to lament when we and all our fighting men

are slain beside our burning ships and when Hector triumphs over the Greeks."

"His spirit cannot contain his wrath against Agamemnon," said Patroklos, "for Agamemnon has treated him, not as a leader of armies who won many battles for him, but as a vile sojourner in the camp. Now Achilles will go into his ships and cross the sea to his own land. And his life there will be a long one. For Thetis, his goddess-mother, has prophesied that if he stays before Troy he will win great and lasting renown but will die young. Not unwilling is Achilles to die in his early youth, but now, because of his anger against Agamemnon, he will return to the place where length of days has been promised him."

The youth Patroklos and the old man Nestor spoke about Achilles and his famous deeds as they both tended the wounded man who had been brought out of the battle.

Achilles was sprung of a race that was greatly favored by the gods. Peleus, the father of Achilles, desired to wed an immortal, and Zeus, the greatest of the gods, prevailed on the nymph Thetis to marry him, although marriage with a mortal was against her will. To the wedding of Thetis and Peleus all the gods came. And for wedding gifts Zeus gave such armor as no mortal had ever worn before—armor wonderfully bright

and wonderfully strong—and he also gave to Peleus two horses that were immortal.

Achilles was the child of Thetis and Peleus—of an immortal woman married to a mortal hero. He grew up strong and very fleet of foot. When he was grown to be a youth he was sent to Cheiron the Centaur, who was half man and half horse, and Cheiron instructed him in all the ways of war. Now, after he had returned to his father's hall, the war against Troy began to be prepared for. Agamemnon, the King, wanted Achilles to join the host. But Thetis, knowing the great disasters that would befall those who went to that war, feared for Achilles. She resolved to hide him so that no word from Agamemnon might reach him. And how did she hide her son? She sent him to King Lycomedes and prayed the King to hide Achilles amongst his daughters.

So the youth Achilles was dressed as a maiden and stayed with the daughters of the King. The messengers of Agamemnon searched in every place for him. Many of them came to the court of King Lycomedes, but not finding one like Achilles amongst the King's sons they went away. Then Odysseus, by King Agamemnon's order, went to seek Achilles. He knew the youth was not amongst the King's sons. He saw the King's daughters in their father's orchard, but could not

tell if Achilles was amongst them, for all were veiled and dressed alike.

Odysseus went away. But he returned as a peddler, carrying in his pack such things as maidens admire—veils and ornaments and brazen mirrors. But under the veils and the ornaments and the mirrors the wise Odysseus left a gleaming sword. When he came before the maidens in the King's orchard he laid down his peddler's pack. The mirrors and the veils and the ornaments were taken up and examined eagerly. But one of the company took up the gleaming sword and looked at it with flashing eyes. Odysseus knew that this was Achilles, King Peleus's son.

He gave the youth the summons of King Agamemnon, bidding him join the war that the kings and princes of Greece were about to wage against Troy. And Achilles was glad to get the summons and glad to go. He returned to his father's citadel. There he made ready to go to where the ships were being gathered. He took with him his father's famous warriors who had never been beaten in battle. And his father bestowed upon him the armor and also the horses that had been the gift of Zeus—the immortal horses, Xanthos and Balios.

But what rejoiced Achilles more than the gifts of the marvelous armor and the immortal horses was that his dear comrade Patroklos was to be

with him as his mate in war. More than brothers they loved each other, these two, Achilles and Patroklos.

Achilles bade good-by to his own country, and to his hero father and his immortal mother, and he and Patroklos with his father's famous warriors went over the sea and joined the host of the kings and princes of Greece. They had made a vow not to refrain from war until they had taken King Priam's famous city. And so very sternly they went into the war against Troy. In that war Achilles became greatly renowned. Before the sight of him, clad in the flashing armor that was the gift of Zeus, and standing in the chariot that was drawn by the immortal horses, the Trojan ranks would break and the Trojan men would flee back to the gates of their city. And then, when ten years of warfare had gone by, there grew up that quarrel between King Agamemnon and Achilles because of the maiden Briseis of the Fair Cheeks. Achilles in bitter wrath went to his tent and not even the words of the wise Odysseus could move him to enter the fight once more. "Look now, Achilles," Odysseus had said to him upon the night before the great battle. "Hector's chariots are out on the plain! Thou canst see his watch fires! A thousand watch fires, and beside each of them sit fifty warriors with their horses loose beside the chariots, champing barley.

Eagerly they wait for the light of the dawn, when they will come against us, and burn our ships, and so destroy all hope of our return."

But Achilles would not go into the fight, and the battle had come and the Greeks were driven back to their ships, and now old Nestor was begging of Patroklos to try to bring Achilles's aid to them. The old man took the youth's hand, and he said to him, "Do thou thyself enter the war and bring Achilles's famous fighting men into the battle with thee. Then we who are wearied with fighting might take breath. And beg Achilles to give you his armor that you may wear it in the battle. If thou shouldst appear clad in Achilles's bronze the Trojans would think that he had entered the war again, and they would not force the fight upon us."

To the youth Patroklos, what the old man Nestor had said seemed good, and when he came back to where Achilles stood beside his ship, he said:

"If thy heart, Achilles, is still hard against Agamemnon's men, and if thou wilt not come to their aid, let me go into the fight and let me take with me thy famous fighting men. And, Achilles, my friend, grant me another thing. Let me wear thine armor and thy helmet, so that the Trojans will believe for a while that Achilles has come back into the battle. Then would they flee before

me, and our warriors would be given a breathing time."

Said Achilles: "I have declared that I shall not cease from my wrath until the Trojans fight their way down to the ships of the Greek. But thou, Patroklos, dear friend, mayst go into the battle. All that thou hast asked shall be freely given thee —my famous fighting men to lead, my armor to wear, and even my chariot and my immortal horses. Drive the Trojans from the Greek ships. But when thou hast driven them from the ships, return to this place. Do not go near to the city. Return, I bid thee, when the Trojans are no longer around the ships, and leave it to others to battle on the plain."

Then Patroklos put on the armor that Zeus had given to Achilles's father, and around his shoulders he put a sword of bronze with its studs of silver, and upon his head he put the helmet with its high horsehair crest—the terrible helmet of Achilles. Then Achilles bade the charioteer yoke the horses to the chariot—the immortal horses, Xanthos and Balios. And while all this was being done Achilles went amongst his famous fighting men and bade them remember all the threats they had uttered against the Trojans at the time when they had been kept from the fight. And his famous fighting men beside their ships shouted in their eagerness to join in the battle.

And so Patroklos went into the fight. But when he was in the fight he forgot the command that Achilles had given him—the command that he was not to bring the battle beyond the ships and that he was to return when the Trojans were beaten toward their own city. Patroklos forgot all that, and he shouted to the immortal horses, Xanthos and Balios, and, slaying warrior after warrior, he swept across the plain, and he came to the very gates of Troy.

And there, beside the gate, was Hector, the great warrior of the Trojans. He came forth. It was then that Patroklos was struck by another hand. The spear had fallen from his hands, the great shield that Achilles had given him had dropped upon the ground, and all in amaze Patroklos was standing there. Hector knew that this was not Achilles but Patroklos in the armor of Achilles. He gave him the blow that slew. Then did Hector exult, crying, "Patroklos, thou didst swear that thou wouldst sack our sacred city, and that thou wouldst take from our people their day of freedom. Now thou hast fallen, and our city need not dread thee ever any more."

Then said Patroklos, "Thou mayst boast now, Hector. But hear my saying and keep it in thine heart. Thy fate, too, is measured, and thee Achilles will slay."

But Hector did not heed what the dying Patrok-

los said. He took from the body the armor of Achilles. He put it upon himself. The armor fitted every limb and joint, and, as he put it on, more courage and strength than ever yet he had felt came into the soul of Hector.

And the immortal steeds that Patroklos had driven, having galloped from the battle, stood apart and would not move for all that their charioteer would do. They stood apart with their heads bowed, and tears flowed from their eyes down on the ground. And Zeus saw them and had pity upon them, and spoke, saying, "Ah, immortal steeds, why did I give you to King Peleus, whose generations die while you remain young and undying? Was it that you should know the sorrows that befall mortal men? Pitiful, indeed, is the lot of all men upon the earth. Even Hector, who boasteth now in the armor that the gods once gave, will shortly go down to his death, and the city he defendeth will be burned with fire."

So saying, Zeus put courage into the hearts of the immortal steeds, and they went where the charioteer would have them go, and they came safely out of the battle.

When Achilles heard of the slaying of his friend Patroklos, he fainted away and his head lay in the ashes of his hut. His goddess-mother heard of his grief as she sat within the depths of the ocean, and she came to him as he was still moaning ter-

ribly. "My child, why weepest thou?" she said. Achilles ceased his moaning and answered her, "Patroklos, my dear friend, has been slain. Now I shall have no joy in my life save the joy of slaying Hector who slew my friend."

Thetis, his goddess-mother, wept when she heard such speech from Achilles. "Short-lived you will be, my son," she said, "for it is appointed by the gods that after the death of Hector your own death will come."

"Straightway, then, let me die," said Achilles, "since I let my friend die without giving him help. Oh, that I had not let my wrath overcome my spirit! Here I stayed, a useless burden on the earth, while my comrade and my dear friend went into the battle. Here I stayed who am the best of all the Greeks. But now let me go back into the battle, that the Trojans may know that Achilles has come into the ranks of the fighters again, although he has tarried long."

"Thou hast no armor now to protect thee in the battle," Thetis said. "Go not into it until I have come to thee again. In the morning I shall return, and I shall bring thee armor that the smith of the gods shall make for thee."

So she spoke, and she turned from her son, and she went to Olympus, where the gods have their dwellings. And as for Achilles, he lay in his hut until one appeared before him and said, "Rouse

thee, Achilles, or Hector will drag into Troy the body of thy friend Patroklos." "How may I go into battle," said Achilles, "since the Trojans hold the armor that should protect me?" "Go down as thou art to the wall that protects the ships, and show thyself to the men of Troy, and it may be that they will shrink back on seeing thee and hearing thy voice, and so thou mayst be able to give those who defend the body of Patroklos a breathing spell."

And when this was told him, Achilles rose and went down to the wall that had been built to protect the ships of the Greeks. He stood upon the wall and he shouted across the trench that was beyond it. His friends and his foes saw him and heard his voice. Around his head was a flame of fire such as was never seen before around the head of a mortal man. And seeing the flame of fire around his head, and hearing his terrible voice, the Trojans were affrighted and stood still. Then the Greeks fought them back from that place; some of them took up the body that the fight had raged around, the body of Patroklos, and laid it on a litter, and bore it out of the battle.

## HOW ACHILLES WENT INTO THE BATTLE

Achilles, when he saw the armor that the smith of the gods had made for him, rose up from where he lay and took the wonderfully wrought pieces in his hands. And he began to put the splendid armor upon him, and none of those who were around could bear to look upon it, because it shone with such brightness. And then, with his shining armor upon him, and with the spear that Cheiron the Centaur had given Peleus, his father, in his hand, he bade his charioteer harness the immortal horses, Xanthos and Balios. And as he mounted the chariot Achilles spoke to his horses. "Xanthos and Balios," he said, "this time bring safely back the hero who goes with you, and do not leave him dead on the plain as ye left the hero Patroklos." And then Xanthos, the immortal steed, spoke, answering for himself and his comrade. "Achilles," he said, with his head bowed and his mane touching the ground, "Achilles, for this time we will bring thee safely back from the battle. But a day will come when we shall not bring thee back, when thou, too, shalt lie with the dead before the walls of Troy."

Then was Achilles greatly troubled, and he

said, "Xanthos, my steed, why dost thou remind me by thy prophecies of what I know already—that my death, too, is appointed, and that I am to perish here, far from my father and mother and my own land?" Then he drove his immortal horses into the battle. The Trojans were affrighted when they saw Achilles himself in the fight. They saw him blazing in the armor that the smith of the gods had made for him. They went backward before his onset. And Achilles shouted to the captains of the Greeks, "No longer stand apart from the men of Troy, but go with me into the battle, and let each man throw his whole soul into the fight."

Then on toward the city he went. He went like a fire raging through a glen that had been parched with heat. High on a tower upon the walls of Troy, Priam, the old King, stood, and he saw the Trojans coming in a rout toward the city, and he saw Achilles: like the star that is seen at harvest time and is called Orion's Dog—the star that is the brightest of all stars, but yet is a sign of evil—so Achilles seemed in his blazing armor. And the old man Priam sorrowed greatly at that sight: he knew in his heart whom this man would slay—Hector, his son, the protector of the city.

Hector was below, standing beside a tower outside the wall. Around him were the Trojans; they came pouring in through the gate without

waiting to speak to each other, to ask who were yet living and who were with the slain. But Hector would not go with them through the gate and into the city. And as he stood there he was saying in his heart, "The fault is mine that the Trojans have been defeated upon the plain. I kept them from entering the city last night, for in my pride I thought that it would be easy to drive Achilles and the Greeks back again, and defeat them utterly, and burn their ships and destroy their hopes of return. Now are the Trojans defeated and dishonored, and many have lost their lives through my pride. Now must I face Achilles. Now must I fight the greatest hero of them all and save the city, or, if it must be, perish by his spear."

Then Achilles came near him. He cried out to Hector, "Between me and thee there can be no pledges. Fight, and fight with all thy soldiership, for now I shall strive to make thee pay for all the sorrow thou hast brought to me because of the slaying of Patroklos, my friend."

Hector flung his spear. But the wonderful shield of Achilles turned it, and the spear fell to the ground. Then was Hector downcast, for he had no other spear. He drew his sword and sprang at Achilles. But the helmet and shield of Achilles let none of Hector's strokes touch his

body. And Achilles had in his hands his own great spear. He stood guarding himself with his shield and watching Hector for a spot to strike him on. Now in the armor that Hector wore—the armor that he had stripped off Patroklos—there was a point at the neck where there was an opening. As Hector came on he drove at his neck with his spear, and he struck him, and Hector fell in the dust.

Then Achilles stripped off him the armor that Patroklos had worn. The other captains of the Greeks came up. They looked on Hector where he lay, and all marveled at his size and strength and goodliness. And Achilles took the body away, and drove toward the ships.

But afterward he gave the body back to Hector's father. For Priam, the old King, came to him where he was seated in his tent, and knelt before him, and clasped his hands. "Bethink thee, Achilles, upon thine own father," he said. "Now for thy father's sake have I come to thee, Achilles, to ask for the body of Hector, my son. I am more pitiable than thy father or than any man, for I have come through dangers to take into my hands the hands that slew my son."

"Thy son is laid upon a bier," Achilles said, "and at the break of day thou mayst bring him back to the city. But tell me, and tell me truly, King, for how many days dost thou desire to

make a funeral for Hector? For so many days' space will I keep the battle from the city so that thou mayst make the funeral in peace." "For nine days we would watch beside Hector's body and lament for him," said his father. "On the tenth day we would have the funeral; on the eleventh day we would make the barrow over him, and on the twelfth day we would fight." "Even for twelve days I will hold back the battle from the city," said Achilles.

And Achilles, after Priam had departed from the tent, lay on his bed and thought upon his own fate—how he, too, would die in battle, and how for him there would be no father to make lament. And so it happened. For one day, as he fought before the gate of the city, an arrow shot by Paris, the brother of Hector, struck him, and he was slain even in the place where he had slain Hector. But the Greeks were able to carry off his body with its armor, and they brought the body back to the ships. Achilles was lamented over, though not by old Peleus, his father. For, from the depths of the sea came Thetis, his goddess-mother, and with her came the Maidens of the Sea. They covered the body of Achilles with wonderful raiment, and over it they lamented for seventeen days and seventeen nights. On the eighteenth day Achilles, the bravest of all

those who had gone to the war against Troy, was laid in the grave beside Patroklos, his dear friend. Over them both the Greeks raised a barrow that was wondered at in the after times.

*"The Children's Homer: The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Willy Pogany. The Macmillan Company, 1918.*

# THE STORY OF ODYSSEUS

## HOW ODYSSEUS RETURNED TO HIS OWN LAND

Odysseus, after he had been twenty years away from his home, was set upon the shore of his own land, Ithaka. For ten years he had been before Troy, making war against the Trojans side by side with Agamemnon and Achilles; for ten years he had been wandering through the seas, striving to win back to his own land and his own house. And now a ship belonging to a friendly people had brought him to Ithaka. They had run the ship ashore and had lifted out Odysseus, wrapped in sheets and rugs, for he was sleeping. They had left him, still asleep, on the sandy shore of his own land. Then the mariners had gone back to their ship, and had departed from Ithaka, going to their own land.

As for Odysseus, when he awakened on the beach, a mist was upon everything, and he did not know what land he had come to. As he rose up and looked around him in bewilderment, he heard a voice say, "This is Ithaka, a land good for goats and cattle, a land of woods and wells." As these

words were spoken the mist that lay on the island scattered, and Odysseus saw that he was indeed on Ithaka, his own country—he knew the harbor and the cave above it, and the hill Neriton all covered with its forest. And knowing them all he knelt down and kissed the earth of his country.

The voice that had spoken spoke again, "Dost thou not know me, Odysseus—me, the daughter of Zeus, who has always helped thee?" Then Odysseus saw standing before him a woman tall and fair and knew her for the goddess, Pallas Athene.

And when he had made reverence to her, the goddess said to him, "There is trouble in thy house, Odysseus, and it would be well for thee not to have it known that thou art come back to thine own land. There is near this place a man who is faithful to thee—Eumæus the swineherd. Go first to his dwelling. But even he must not know for the present that thou hast returned, Odysseus. I shall change thy appearance so that, even should you go within your own hall, no man will know thee." Then the goddess, Pallas Athene, made in his appearance a change that would have been evil but that it was to last only for a while. She made his skin to wither; she dimmed his shining eyes; she made his yellow hair gray and scanty. Then she changed his raiment to a beggar's wrap, torn and stained with smoke. And over his shoulders she cast the hide of a deer. She put into his

hands a beggar's staff and a tattered bag with a cord to hang it by. And when she had made such a change in his appearance, the goddess left Odysseus.

And Odysseus, standing in a beggar's garb upon the beach of the land he had won back to at last, pondered upon the things that his helper had told him. He knew that in his house there were men who would kill him. They would take his possessions from him—his land and his house, his flocks and his herds, and all the things he had brought to his house in the old days. Even at that very hour his house was filled with young men who were wooing Penelope, his wife, so that she might marry one of them, for his wife, too, they would take from him. But he knew that Penelope, hating the thought of marriage, delayed to make her choice of any of the young men who were wooing her: meanwhile the wooers were wasting and devouring all that was in his house and his fields. Odysseus knew, as he stood upon the beach of Ithaka in his beggar's garb, that of all the dangers he had been in during his twenty years of war and wandering, the greatest were still before him and in his own house.

As Odysseus drew near to the place where Eumæus, his faithful servant of the old time, lived, dogs dashed out at him, yelping and snapping. Eumæus had made for himself a dwelling

near the beach in the wildest part of the island, and had built a wall around it, and had made for the swine he herded pens in the courtyard. He lived in this place, tending the swine, with three young men to help him.

The swineherd ran out of the courtyard and drove the fierce dogs away. Odysseus looked on him, and he knew Eumæus even although he had now become an ancient man. And Eumæus, looking on him, and seeing in him a beggar, said, "Old man, it is well my dogs did not tear thee, for they might have brought on me the shame of thy death. I have grief and pains enough, the gods know, without such happenings. But come in, old man. I have bread and wine to give thee."

The swineherd led the seeming beggar into the courtyard; he let him sit down on a heap of brushwood on which he had spread a shaggy goatskin. "No wanderer ever comes to this land," he said, "but that our lady Penelope gives him entertainment, hoping that he will have something to tell her of her lord Odysseus. Ah, as for that man, no matter what wanderers and vagrants say, he will never return to Ithaka. Never again shall I find so good a lord, nor would I find one so kind even if I were back in my own land, and saw the faces of my father and mother. But not so much for them do I mourn as for the loss of my master."

Said Odysseus to him: "Thou sayest that thy master will never return, but I notice that thou art slow to believe thine own words. Now I tell thee that Odysseus will return, and return in this same year. And as sure as the old moon wanes and the young moon is born, he will take vengeance on those whom you know of—those who eat his substance and abuse his servants and dishonor his house. I say that, and I swear it to thee with an oath."

But Eumæus the swineherd shook his head, and went about preparing a meal for his guest. He cooked for him portions of a swine he had killed, and he gave him bread and wine, and Odysseus, glad of such kindness, said to him, "May Zeus and all the other gods grant thee thy heart's dearest wish for the welcome thou hast given to me."

And sitting there, on the heap of brushwood, in the courtyard of Eumæus' dwelling, and with the swine around him, he thought upon how he might come to find Telemachus, his son. Odysseus had not looked upon his son since he was a child of a month old. The war was then beginning: the kings and princes of Greece had sent a messenger to Odysseus, bidding him betake himself to their camp. Odysseus had pretended to be a madman. And that the messenger might believe that he was indeed a madman, he did a thing that no man ever

saw being done before—he took an ass and an ox and yoked them together to the same plow, and he had begun to plow a field. Then the messenger, to test him, took the child Telemachus and laid him down in the field in the way of the plow. Odysseus had turned aside when he came near where the child lay. Thereby he had shown that he was not a madman. And he had to take King Agamemnon's summons and go to Aulis where the ships of the kings and the princes of Greece had been gathered. And he had not looked upon his son since that time, now so long ago.

He heard the sound of footsteps. The fierce dogs were outside, and he expected to hear them yelping against the stranger's approach. No sound came from the dogs, however. Then he saw a young man coming toward them and the swineherd's dogs fawning upon him.

And when Eumæus saw this young man he ran toward him and kissed his head and his eyes and his hands. And Odysseus heard him say, "Telemachus, art thou come back to us? Like a light in the darkness thou hast appeared! Come in, dear son; come in that I may see thee, child of Odysseus, once more in my house."

Odysseus rose from his seat as Telemachus came to him. And the young man, looking on the seeming beggar, said to him courteously, "Be seated, friend. Another seat can be found for me."

Then, while the swineherd told Telemachus of the beggar who had come to his dwelling, Odysseus looked upon his son. As a lion might look over his cub, Odysseus looked over Telemachus. Was he fit to aid in the winning back of all that he, Odysseus, had possessed in Ithaka? He looked on Telemachus, and he saw that he was a young man who was brave and resolute. And as he saw this, hope entered into his heart and he felt that he could fight against those who were in his house, and fight against them with prospect of victory. Neither Telemachus nor the swineherd had noted how the one in the guise of a beggar had looked upon the young man.

"For this stranger I will do what I can," said Telemachus, speaking to Eumæus. "I will give him a mantle and a doublet, with shoes for his feet, and a sword to defend himself with. But, Eumæus, I would not have him go near my father's house. The wooers of my mother who are there now grow more insolent each day, and they might mock the stranger if he went amongst them."

Then said Odysseus, speaking for the first time: "Young sir, what thou hast said seems strange to me. Dost thou willingly submit to insolence in thine own father's house? But perhaps it is that the people of the town hate thee and will not help thee against thine enemies. Ah, if I had youth

as I have spirit, or if I were the son of Odysseus, I should go amongst them this very day, and make myself dangerous to each man of them."

Said Telemachus, answering him, "The people of the town do not hate me, and they would help me if they could. But the wooers of my mother are powerful men. And if I should oppose them I would assuredly be slain in my father's house, for how could I hope to overcome so many?"

He spoke, and then he closed his eyes, for he was very weary. And Telemachus saw, while thinking he only dreamt it, a woman come into the courtyard. She was fair and tall and splendid, and the dogs shrank from her presence. She touched the seeming beggar with a golden wand. As she did, the marks of age and beggary fell away from him, and the man stood up, and he was tall and noble looking. "Who art thou?" cried Telemachus. The swineherd had gone out of the courtyard, and the one whom he had spoken to as a beggar had now been changed into this figure. "Who art thou? Even a moment ago thou didst look aged and a beggar. Now thou dost look like a chief of men! Art thou not one of the divine beings?"

"Hush," said Odysseus, "do not speak so, Telemachus. I am a mortal, and thy father." And then Telemachus was kissed by him, and he felt tears upon his cheeks.

"I am Odysseus, thy father. After much suffering and many wanderings I have come here, to my own country, and to thee, my son." And then Telemachus heard about his wars and his wanderings, and he knew that his father was really before him. He threw his arms around his father's neck, and the two talked together while Eumæus herded the swine in the woods away from the dwelling. And when Eumæus came back into the hut he saw no change in the man who was his guest. For Pallas Athene had put on Odysseus again the appearance of age and beggary. And Telemachus, speaking of him, said to Eumæus, "Take this stranger into the town, that he may go about as he desires."

Telemachus then went from the dwelling of the swineherd. And about the time that he had reached his house, Odysseus, in the guise of a beggar, with Eumæus the swineherd, made their way to the town and to Odysseus's house. Odysseus had a ragged bag across his shoulders, and he carried a staff that had been given him by the swineherd to help him over the slippery ground. And when they had gone through the town and had come before the house, they heard the sound of a lyre being played within. The wooers of Penelope were feasting, and they had a minstrel to sing to them.

Odysseus caught the swineherd by the hand

suddenly and with a hard grip, and he said, "Lo, now! I who have wandered in many lands and have walked in pain through many cities have come at last to the house of Odysseus. There it is, standing as of old, with building beyond building; with its walls and its battlements, its courts and its doors. The house of Odysseus, verily! And lo! Unwelcome men revel within, and the smoke of their feast rises up, and the sound of the lyre is heard, playing for them."

And then, as they went through the courtyard, Odysseus and Eumæus, a thing happened that dashed Odysseus's eyes with tears. A hound lay in the dirt of the yard, a hound that was very old. All uncared for he lay in the dirt, old and feeble. But he had been a famous hound, and Odysseus himself had trained him before he went to the wars of Troy. Argos was his name. Now as Odysseus came near, the hound Argos knew him, and stood up before him and whined and dropped his ears, but had no strength to come near. Odysseus knew the hound and stopped and gazed on him. "A good hound lies here," he said to Eumæus. "Once, I think, he was so swift that no beast in the deep places of the wood could flee from him." Then Odysseus went on. And the hound Argos lay in the dirt of the yard, and that same day the life passed from him.

## HOW ODYSSEUS DELIVERED HIS HOUSE

It was upon that day that the wife of Odysseus, the lady Penelope, called to her nurse, Eurycleia, and said, "This evening I will go into the hall of our house and speak with my son Telemachus. Bid my handmaidens make ready to come with me, for I shrink from going amongst the wooers alone."

Eurycleia went to call the handmaidens, and Penelope washed off her cheeks the traces of the tears that she had wept that day. Then she sat down to wait for the handmaidens to come to her. As she waited she fell into a deep sleep. And as she slept, the goddess, Pallas Athene, bathed her face in the Water of Beauty and took all weariness from her body, and restored all her youthfulness to her. The sound of the handmaidens' voices as they came in awakened her, and Penelope rose up to go into the hall.

Now as she went amongst them with her two handmaidens, one standing on each side of her, the wooers were amazed, for they had never seen one so beautiful. The hearts of all were enchanted with love for her, and each prayed that he might have her for his wife.

And then Eumæus the swineherd came to the door with a companion, a stranger, following him. The stranger had the appearance of a beggar; he was wretchedly clad and he leaned on an old man's staff. He looked upon the young lords who were at the feasting tables, and he went in no farther, but sat down upon the threshold of the hall.

The lady Penelope did not look upon any of her wooers, but she went to her son, Telemachus, and spoke to him. "I have had a dream," she said, "about a stranger who is to come to this house. If such a one comes it must be thy care, my son, to have him treated well."

"My lady mother," said Telemachus, "if the stranger be the one who has come to the threshold already, I shall see to it that he will be well treated in the house of Odysseus." It was then that Penelope, looking to the threshold, saw the man who had come to the house with Eumæus the swineherd.

"Lady, if any more than we beheld thee in the beauty thou hast now, by so many more wouldst thou have wooers to-morrow," said one of the wooers, Eurymachus by name, speaking to Penelope.

"Speak not so to me, lord Eurymachus," said the lady Penelope, "speak not of my beauty, which departed in the grief I felt when my lord

went to the wars of Troy." As she spoke these words the man seated upon the threshold of the house lifted up his head and looked upon her. Then the lady Penelope and her handmaidens went to her own chamber.

It was then that Telemachus called to Eumæus; he gave him bread and meat, and he said, "Take it and give it to the stranger at the doorway, and tell him that he may go amongst the company and crave an alms from each of the lords.

Then Antinous, the most insolent of the young lords who had come there to woo the lady Penelope, cried out, "O notorious swineherd, why dost thou bring this fellow here? Have we not vagabonds enough? Is it nothing to thee that worthless fellows come here and devour thy master's substance?" Hearing such a speech from Antinous, Telemachus had to say, "Antinous, I see that thou hast good care for me and mine. I marvel that thou hast such good care. But wouldst thou have me drive a stranger from the door? The gods forbid that I should do such a thing. Nay, Antinous, give the stranger something for the sake of the good name of this house."

"If all the company gave him as much as I, he will have something to keep him from begging," said the insolent young lord, meaning that he had it in his mind to work some hurt upon the beggar.

Then the beggar who was Odysseus came before Antinous. "They say that thou art the noblest of all the wooers of the lady Penelope," he said, "and for that reason thou shouldst give a better thing than any of the others. Look upon me! I, too, had a house of mine own, and I was accounted wealthy amongst men, and I had servants to wait upon me. And many a time I made the wanderer welcome, and gave him something from my store."

"Stand away from my table, thou wretched fellow," said Antinous.

"Thou hast good looks, lord Antinous," said Odysseus, "but thou hast not wisdom. Out of thine own house thou wouldst not give a grain of salt to a suppliant. And, even while thou dost sit at another man's table, thou dost not find it in thine heart to give something out of the plenty that is before thee."

So Odysseus spoke. The young lord, Antinous, became terribly angered. He caught up a stool, and with it he struck at Odysseus. On the back, at the base of the right shoulder, he struck him. Such a blow would have knocked over another man, but Odysseus stood steadfast under it. He gave one look at Antinous, and then, without a word, he went over and sat once more upon the threshold of the hall.

Telemachus had in his heart a mighty rage for

the stroke that had been given his father. But he let no tear fall from his eyes, and he stood very still. But he brooded in his heart evil for the wooers of his mother. Odysseus, after a while, lifted up his head, and spoke.

"Wooers of the renowned queen," he said, "hear what the spirit within me bids me say to all of you. There is neither pain nor shame in a blow that a man may get in battle. But in the blow that Antinous has given me—a blow aimed at a beggar—there is pain and there is shame. And now I call upon the god who is the avenger of insult to the poor to bring, not a wedding to Antinous, but the issue of death."

"Sit there and eat thy meat and be quiet," Antinous called out, "or else thou wilt be dragged through the house by the heels, and the flesh will be stripped off thy bones."

Then Telemachus came amongst the wooers. "This man must not be struck again in this hall," he said. And then he said, "Sirs, if you have finished feasting, and if the time has come for you to go to your own homes, go in peace, I pray you."

All were astonished that Telemachus should speak to them all so boldly—he who was wont to take all they said and did with quietness. But no one of the wooers answered him back, for one

said to the other, "What he has said is fitting. We have nothing to say against it. To misuse a stranger in the house of Odysseus is a shame. Now let us pour a libation to the gods, and let each man go to his home." The wine was poured out and the wooers departed. Then Telemachus was left in the hall with the beggar man who was Odysseus, his father.

Then said Odysseus: "My son, we must now get the weapons out of this hall. Take them down from the walls." Telemachus and Odysseus took down the helmets and the sharp-pointed spears. And as they carried them out of the hall, Odysseus said, "To-morrow, when the wooers miss the weapons and say, 'Why have they been taken away?' answer them, saying, 'The smoke of the fire dulled them, and they no longer looked the weapons my father left behind him when he went to the wars of Troy. Besides, I am fearful lest some day the company in the hall come to a quarrel, one with the other, and snatch the weapons in anger.' "

Telemachus carried the weapons and armor out of the hall and he hid them in the women's part of the house. Then he went to his own chamber. It was then that Penelope came back to the hall to speak to the stranger. She spoke to the old nurse, Eurycleia, bidding her bring a bench to the fire with a fleece upon it, so that the stranger

might sit there in comfort while he told her of his wanderings. Eurycleia brought the bench over and Odysseus sat on it, near to the fire. Then said the lady Penelope, "First, stranger, wilt thou tell me who thou art, and what is thy name, and thy race and thy country?"

Said Odysseus, "Ask me all thou wilt, lady, but inquire not concerning my name, or race, or country, lest thou shouldst fill my heart with more pains than I am able to endure. Verily, I am a man of grief. But hast thou no tale to tell me? We know of thee, Penelope, for thy fame goes up to heaven, and no one of mortal men can find any fault in thee."

Then said Penelope, "What excellence I had of face or form departed from me when my lord Odysseus went from this hall to the wars of Troy. And since he went a host of ills has beset me. Ah, would he were here to watch over my life! The lords of all the islands around and the lords of Ithaka have come here and are wooing me against my will. They devour the substance of this house, and my son is being impoverished."

"How dost thou keep them from forcing you to wed one of them?" Odysseus said.

"Long ago," said Penelope, "a god put into my mind a device to keep marriage with any of them away from me. I set up a great web upon my loom and I spoke to my wooers, saying, 'Odys-

seus is assuredly dead, but I pray that you be not eager to speed on this marriage for me. Wait until I finish the web I am weaving. It is a shroud for Odysseus's father, and I make it against the day when death shall come to him. There will be no woman to care for him when I have left his son's house, and I would not have such a hero lie without a shroud, lest the women of our land should blame me for neglect of my husband's father in his last days.'

"So I spoke, and they agreed to wait until the web was woven. In the daytime I wove it, but at night I unraveled the web. So three years passed away. Then the fourth year came, and my wooers were hard to deal with, for my treacherous handmaidens brought them in upon me as I was unraveling the web. And now I cannot devise any other plan to keep the marriage away from me. My parents command me to marry one of my wooers. My son cannot long endure to see the substance of his house and field being wasted, and the wealth that should be his destroyed. And there is no reason why I should not wed again, for surely Odysseus, my lord, is dead."

Said Odysseus, "Thy lord was known to me. On the way to Troy he came to my land. For twelve days he stayed in my town, and I gave him good entertainment."

When Odysseus was spoken of, the heart of

Penelope melted, and tears ran down her cheeks. Odysseus had pity for his wife when he saw her weeping for the man who was even then sitting by her. Tears would have run down his own cheeks only that he was strong enough to hold them back. He leaned toward her, and said, "Do not waste thy heart with endless weeping, lady. Cease from lamentation, and lay up in thy heart the word I give thee. Odysseus is near. He has lost all his companions, and he knows not how to win back this house and the possessions that were his. By the hearth of Odysseus to which I am come, I swear that Odysseus himself will stand up here before the old moon wanes and the new moon is born."

"Ah," said Penelope, "but even now I am being forced by my parents to choose a husband from my wooers, and depart from the house of Odysseus."

"And how wilt thou choose from amongst them?" asked Odysseus.

"In this way I will make choice," said Penelope. "My husband's great bow is still in the house. The one who can bend the bow, and shoot an arrow through the holes in the backs of axes set up one behind the other—him will I choose for my husband."

When she said this Odysseus started up as if this was a word he had been waiting for. "Delay

no longer the contest of the bow," he cried out. "Let it be to-morrow."

"Is that thy counsel, O stranger?" said Penelope.

"It is my counsel," said Odysseus. "Some god hath surely instructed thee in this matter. But delay no longer than to-morrow."

"I thank thee for thy counsel," said Penelope, "and to-morrow we will have the contest of the bow. And now farewell, for I must go to my rest. And do thou lie down in the vestibule, in the bed that has been made for thee." So Penelope spoke, and then she went to her chamber with her handmaidens. In her bed she thought over what the stranger had told her, and she wept again, thinking of Odysseus. And as for Odysseus, he sat by his own hearth, greatly elated at the thought of the device that Penelope had told him of—the contest of the bow which would take place on the morrow.

And on the morrow, early, Penelope went down to the chamber where Odysseus's great bow was kept. That bow had been given him by a hero named Iphitus long ago. Odysseus had not taken it with him when he went to the wars of Troy. Penelope carried in her hand the great key that opened the doors of the chamber—a key all of bronze with a handle of ivory. Now as she thrust the key into the locks, the doors graned as a bull

groans. She went within, and she saw the great bow upon its peg. She took it down and laid it upon her knees, and thought long upon the man who had bent it.

Beside the bow was the quiver full of bronze-weighted arrows. The servant took the quiver and Penelope took the bow, and they went from the treasure chamber and into the hall where the wooers were.

When she came in she spoke to the company that was there. "Lords of Ithaka and of the islands around," she said, "you have come here, each desiring that I should wed him. Now the time has come for me to make my choice of a man from amongst you. Here is how I shall make the choice.

"This is the bow of Odysseus, my lord who is no more. Whosoever amongst you who can bend this bow and shoot an arrow from it through the holes in the backs of the axes which I shall have set up, him will I wed, and to his house I will go, forsaking the house of my wedlock, this house so filled with treasure and substance, this house which I shall remember in my dreams."

As she spoke, Telemachus took twelve axes and set them upright in an even line, so that one could shoot an arrow through the hole that was in the back of each ax head. Then Eumæus, the old

swineherd, took the bow of Odysseus and laid it before the wooers of Penelope.

One of the wooers took up the bow and tried to bend it. But he could not bend it, and he laid it down at the doorway with the arrow beside it. Others took up the bow and warmed it at the fire and rubbed it with lard to make it pliable. As they were doing this, Eumæus the swineherd and a man who was a cattleherd, Philœtius, passed out of the hall.

Odysseus followed them into the courtyard. He laid a hand on each and said, "Swineherd and cattleherd, I have a word to say to you. But will you keep it to yourselves, the word I say? And first, what would you do to help Odysseus if he should return? Would you stand on his side, or on the side of the wooers? Answer me now from your hearts."

Said the cattleherd, "May Zeus fulfill my wish and bring Odysseus back! Then thou shouldst know on whose side I would stand." And Eumæus said, "If Odysseus should return I would be on his side, and that with all the strength that is in me."

When they made such answers, Odysseus declared himself. Lifting up his hand to heaven he said, "I am your master, Odysseus. After twenty years I have come back to my own country, and I find that, of all my servants, by you two alone is

my home-coming desired. If you need see a token that I am indeed Odysseus, look down on my foot. See there the mark that the wild boar left on me in the days of my youth."

Straightway he drew the rags from the scar he had on his foot, and the swineherd and cattleherd saw it and marked it well. Knowing that it was indeed Odysseus who stood before them, they cast their arms around him and kissed him on the head and shoulders. And Odysseus was moved by their tears, and he kissed their heads and their hands.

As they went back to the hall, he told Eumæus to bring the bow to him as he was bearing it through the hall. He told him, too, to order Eurycleia, the faithful nurse, to bar the doors of the women's apartment at the end of the hall, and to bid the women, even if they heard a groaning and a din, not to come into the hall. And he charged the cattleherd to bar the gates of the courtyard.

Now there was amongst the wooers a man named Ctesippus, and he was the rudest and roughest of them all. When he saw Odysseus coming within the hall with the swineherd and the cattleherd he shouted out, "Here is a guest of Telemachus to whom some gift is due from us. It will be unseemly if he should get nothing today. Therefore I will bestow this upon him as a token."

Saying this, Ctesippus took up the foot of a slaughtered ox and flung it full at Odysseus. Odysseus drew back, and the ox's foot struck the wall. Then did Odysseus smile grimly upon the wooers.

One of the wooers, Eurymachus, was striving to bend the bow. As he struggled to do so he groaned aloud, "Not because I may not marry Penelope do I groan, but because we youths of to-day are shown to be weaklings beside Odysseus, whose bow we can in no way bend."

Then Antinous, the proudest of the wooers, made answer and said, "Why should we strive to bend the bow to-day? Nay, lay the bow aside, and let the wine bearers pour out a cupful for each. In the morning let us make sacrifice to the Archer god, and pray that the bow be fitted to some of our hands."

Then Odysseus came forward and said, "Sirs, you do well to lay the bow aside for to-day. But will you not put the bow into my hands, that I may try to bend it, and judge for myself whether I have any of the strength that once was mine?"

All the wooers were angry that a seeming beggar should attempt to bend the bow that none of the company had been able to bend. "Thou wretched beggar," cried Antinous, "is it not enough that thou art let into this high hall to pick up scraps, but thou must listen to our speech and

join in our conversation?" But now Eumæus the swineherd had taken up the bow. Some shouted to him, "Where art thou going with the bow, thou crazy fellow? Put it down." But Eumæus went to Odysseus and put the bow into his hands.

For long Odysseus stood with the bow in his hands, handling it as a minstrel handles a lyre when he stretches a cord or tightens a peg. Then he bent the great bow; he bent it without an effort, and at his touch the bowstring made a sound that was like the cry of a swallow. The wooers, seeing him bend that mighty bow, felt, every man of them, a sharp pain at the heart. They saw Odysseus take up an arrow and fit it to the string. He held the notch, and he shot the bronze-weighted arrow through the holes in the backs of the ax heads. Eumæus went to Eurycleia and told her to bar the door of the women's apartment and the cattleherd went out of the hall and barred the gates leading out of the courtyard.

"Thou seest that thy guest does not shame thee through foolish boasting," said Odysseus, speaking to Telemachus. "I have bent the bow of Odysseus, and I have shot the arrow aright. But now it is time to provide the feast for the lords who woo thy lady mother. While it is yet light the feast must be served to them, and with the feast they must have music and the dance."

Saying this he nodded to Telemachus, bending

his terrible brows. Telemachus instantly girt his sword upon him and took his spear in his hand. Outside was heard the thunder of Zeus. And now Odysseus had stripped his rags from him and was standing upright, looking a master of men. The mighty bow was in his hands, the bronze-weighted arrows were by him. "It is ended," he said. "My trial is ended. Now will I have another mark." Saying this he put a bronze-weighted arrow against the string of the bow, and shot at the first of his enemies.

It was at Antinous he pointed the arrow. He smote him with the arrow in the throat and the point passed out clean through his neck. The wine cup fell from his hands and Antinous fell dead across the table. Odysseus shouted to the wooers, "Ye dogs, ye that said in your hearts that Odysseus would never return to his home, ye that wasted my substance, and troubled my wife, and injured my servants; ye who showed no fear of heaven, nor of the just judgments of men; behold Odysseus returned, and know what death is being loosed on you."

Then Eurymachus shouted out, "Friends, this man will not hold his hands, nor cease from shooting with the bow, until all of us are slain. Now must we enter into battle with him. Draw your swords and hold up the tables before you for shields and advance upon him."

But even as he spoke Odysseus loosed an arrow at him and shot Eurymachus through the breast. He let the sword fall from his hand, and he, too, fell dead on the floor. Odysseus, as long as he had arrows to defend himself, kept shooting at and smiting the wooers. When all the arrows were gone, he put the helmet on his head and took the shield that Telemachus had brought him, and the two great spears. He directed Telemachus and Eumæus and Philœtius the cattleherd to cast their spears. When they cast them with Odysseus, each one struck a man, and four of the wooers fell down. And again, Odysseus directed his following to cast their spears, and again they cast them, and slew their men. They drove those who remained from one end of the hall to the other, and slew them all.

Straightway the doors of the women's apartment were flung open, and Eurycleia appeared. She saw Odysseus amongst the bodies of the dead, and she would have cried out in triumph if Odysseus had not restrained her. "Rejoice within thine own heart," he said, "but do not cry aloud, for it is an unholy thing to triumph over men lying dead. These men the gods themselves have overcome, because of their own hard and unjust hearts."

Then to Penelope, Eurycleia the nurse went. "I did not see the slaying," she said, "but I heard

the groaning of men. And then I went into the hall and I found Odysseus standing amongst many dead men, and it comforted my heart to see him standing there like a lion aroused. Come with me now, lady, that you may both enter into your heart's delight—you who have suffered so much affliction. Thy lord hath come alive to his own hearth, and he hath found his wife and son alive and well."

"Ah, no," said Penelope. "Ah, no, Odysseus has not returned. He who hath slain the wooers is one of the deathless gods, come down to punish them for their injustice and hard-heartedness. Odysseus long ago lost the way of his returning, and he is lying dead in some far-off land."

But Eurycleia took Penelope by the hand and led her from the upper chamber into the hall. Odysseus was standing by a tall pillar. He waited there for his wife to come and speak to him. But Penelope stood still, and gazed long upon him, and made no step toward him. Then said Telemachus, "Mother, can it be that thy heart is so hard? Here is my father, and thou wilt not go to him nor question him at all."

Said Penelope, "My mind is amazed and I have no strength to speak, nor to ask him aught, nor even to look on him face to face."

Then said Odysseus, "Is thy heart indeed so hard? No other woman in the world, I think, would stand so aloof from her husband who, after

so much toil and so many trials, has come back after twenty years to his own hearth."

But now did Penelope know assuredly that the man who stood before her was indeed her husband, the steadfast Odysseus, and she fell a-weeping and put her arms around his neck. "O Odysseus, my lord," she said, "be not angry with thy wife. Always the fear was in my heart that some guileful stranger should come here professing to be Odysseus, and that I should take him to me as my husband. How terrible such a thing would be! But now my heart is freed from all doubts. Be not angry with me, Odysseus, for not throwing myself on thy neck." Then the husband and wife wept together, and Penelope said, "It was the gods did this to us, Odysseus—who grudged that we should have joy of the days of our youth."

Next day they told each other of things that had happened in the twenty years they were apart; Odysseus speaking of his own toils and sorrows, and Penelope telling what she had endured at the hands of the wooers. And as they told tales, one to the other, slumber came upon them, and the dawn found them side by side.

So ends the story of Odysseus who went with King Agamemnon to the wars of Troy; who made the plan of the Wooden Horse by which Priam's city was taken at last; who missed the way of his return, and came to the land of the Lotos Eaters;

who came to the country of the dread Cyclopes, to the Island of Aeolus and to the house of Circe, the Enchantress; who heard the song of the Sirens, and came to the Rocks Wandering, and to the terrible Charybdis, and to Scylla, past whom no other man had won scatheless; who landed on the island where the Cattle of the Sun grazed, and who stayed upon Ogygia, the home of the nymph Calypso; so ends the story of Odysseus, who would have been made deathless and ageless by Calypso if he had not yearned always to come back to his own hearth and his own land. And, spite of all his troubles and his toils, he was fortunate, for he found on his return a constant wife and a dutiful son. So ends the story of Odysseus.

*"The Children's Homer: The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Willy Pogany. The Macmillan Company, 1918.*

# THESEUS AND THE MONSTER

King Minos sat on a low throne in the hall of his palace. Around the King's neck was a garland of iris flowers and the scepter that he held in his hand was carved into the shape of an iris. Attendants came and bowed low before him. "The ship from Athens has come," they said to King Minos.

Now long before this it had happened that Minos, the greatest King in all the world at the time, had sent his son to make peace between Crete and the little land of Athens, and his son had been slain by the people of Athens. Then was the great King made angry and unforgiving, and he demanded that the Athenians should send into Crete every year seven youths and seven maidens as a price for the life of his son. And these youths and maidens were not to be reared in slavery—they were to be sent so that a monster named the Minotaur might devour them.

And now the ship had come from Athens again; it was a ship that bore a black and mournful sail. The youths and maidens who were on it looked upon the city they had been brought to—the strange city that was called Knossos; they saw

the palace of King Minos, the red and black palace that Dædalus had builded; they saw the harbor with the stairway leading up into the city; they saw the crowd of ships with their red sails. All who had been brought from Athens on that ship were downcast and sorrowful except one youth—a tall youth who, although his hands were bound, had still in his belt a great ivory-hilted sword.

They spoke about this youth, the youths and maidens of Athens, and, as the attendants came to take them off the ship, they looked toward him as to the only one who could give them any protection. They told each other about his coming to Athens.

One day there had come into the city a youth who had for his only possession a great sword. It was known that he had slain cruel robbers who had infested the ways. The King of Athens was a very fearful man; he was always in dread some one would come into the city and slay him. He had this young man sent for and brought to his palace.

He had come and had sat down at the banquet offered him by the King. But before the cup was brought him something had moved the young man to draw forth the sword that he bore. Fearfully the King of Athens had looked upon that sword. He knew it from of old. Once that sword with its ivory hilt and the curious emblems carved upon

it had been his own sword. He had laid it under a stone, telling a princess that the sword might not be taken out of the place unless by a son of hers and his—a son who was strong enough to move the stone. And now he saw the sword in the hands of this stranger. Who, he asked, was his mother? Æthra, the daughter of the King of Troezen. And the young man told how he had moved the stone at his mother's bidding, and had taken from under it the sword that was hidden there. Then the King of Athens—Ægeus was his name—looked upon the young man, and knew him for his own and the Princess Æthra's son. The young man's name was Theseus.

At that time the people of Athens had come together to draw lots—the lots that were to decide which man's son or daughter was to be taken to Crete by King Minos's messengers. And in the place where the lots were being drawn King Ægeus sat, and beside him stood his son, Prince Theseus, upright, youthful, and manly, his hand upon the great sword he had taken from under the weighty stone.

But before the lots had been drawn Theseus cried out, "People of Athens, it is not right that your children should go, and that I who am the son of King Ægeus should be left here in safety. Surely, if any of the youths of Athens should face the dread Minotaur, I should face it. There is one

lot you may leave undrawn. I, Theseus, will go to Crete."

His father had come down from the throne. He had pleaded with him, begging him not to go, and begging him not to speak again. But already the people had consented to Theseus's going. "It is right," they said, "for if King Ægeus had protected the son of King Minos, he would not have been slain, and this tribute would not have been exacted from us." Such speech from the people made King Ægeus consent to his son's going with other men's sons and daughters. Then, with six other youths and with seven maidens, Theseus had gone aboard the ship that every year brought to Crete the grievous tribute from Athens.

The ship had always sailed with black sails hoisted. But this time, before it sailed, King Ægeus had given to the master a white sail to take with him. Theseus had promised his father he would hoist the white sail if it should happen that he escaped. The King would watch for the return of the ship, and if the sail were black he would know that the Minotaur had dealt with his son as he had dealt with the other youths and maidens who had gone from Athens. But if the sail were white . . . Ah, but King Ægeus could hardly hope to look upon the white sail of the returning ship!

And so they were taken off the ship with the

black sail and brought into the hall where King Minos sat upon his low throne. The King had the face of one who had thought long upon difficult things, and his eyes were strangely dark and deep. His eyes singled out the one who, although his hands were bound, had still in his belt the great ivory-hilted sword. The attendants who had brought the youths and maidens there told the King that this youth was the son of the King of Athens, and that Theseus was his name. And when King Minos heard this, he said a name over and over again, and the name he said was that of his own son.

And after that a maiden came into the hall where the youths and maidens of Athens stood before the King. She was the daughter of Minos, Theseus knew, for upon her brow was a wreath of iris flowers, and she had Minos's deep and dark eyes. Two other maidens, her attendants, were with the princess. Not like the maidens of Greece were they: instead of having flowing garments on, and sandals, and wearing their hair bound, they had on dresses of gleaming material—dresses that were tight at the waists and then wide-spreading; their hair was loose upon their shoulders and it had been made wavy; they had on shoes of a substance that shone like glass. Never had the son of the King of Athens looked upon maidens who were so strange-looking as the three

who had come into the hall of King Minos. They spoke to the King in the strange Cretan language; then Minos's daughter made reverence to her father and went from the hall with her attendants.

The youths and maidens of Athens were brought into another hall in King Minos's great palace. The walls were red, and there were paintings in black upon them—pictures of bulls, with girls and slender youths struggling with them. The hall was a place for games. Theseus stood with the others and watched what was happening in the hall. His hands were unbound now, and the great sword had been taken from him.

There was a wrestling match. One man overthrew all the wrestlers who came to grips with him. And when he had overthrown them he shouted and spoke boastfully of what he had done. Theseus was made angry by that man's arrogance. No other wrestler would come against him, and the man stood with his arms folded, looking scornfully on all who were there.

Theseus stood in his way when he turned to leave the hall. He would not move to let the wrestler pass. Then the boastful man laid hands upon the youth from Athens and pulled him into the arena. Theseus saw the daughter of King Minos standing near with her two attendants.

Most eagerly the people of the palace and the youths and maidens of Athens watched the

wrestling bout between Theseus and the lordly wrestler. Those who were from Athens, when they looked upon him, thought that they had never seen Theseus look so tall and so conquering: beside the slender, dark-haired people of Crete he looked like a statue of one of the gods.

Very adroit was the Cretan wrestler. Theseus had to use all his strength and skill to keep upon his feet. But he mastered the tricks the wrestler was using against him. Steadily he stood, and the Cretan became spent and gasping in his effort to overthrow the youth. Then Theseus made him feel his grip. He bent him backward; then, suddenly, using all of his strength, he forced him to the ground. All who were watching were filled with wonder at the strength and skill of the youth Theseus.

With those who were his companions Theseus went to another place in the palace. The youths and maidens of Athens could make no escape, for guards followed them, and the way to the ships was filled with strangers who would not let them pass. They were allowed to wander through the palace. In every word they said to each other there was fear, for they talked to each other always about the Minotaur. Theseus went from one to the other of them, telling them that perhaps there was a way by which he might come to the Minotaur and destroy it. And his companions,

remembering how he had overthrown the lordly wrestler, were comforted a little, thinking Theseus might be able to destroy the Minotaur and save all of them.

One night, while he was sleeping, there came a touch upon his face, and Theseus, awakening, saw a dark-faced servant who beckoned to him. He left the little chamber. "I am Ariadne," a voice said to him, and he saw in the passage one whom he knew was the daughter of King Minos.

"O youth from Greece, I have come to save you from the dread Minotaur," she said to him. She led him to the chamber where King Minos had sat. It was lighted now by many little lamps. "I will show a way of escape to you," said Ariadne.

Then Theseus looked around, and he saw that none of the other youths and maidens were near them. He looked on Ariadne, and he saw that this princess with her strange face and her long and dark eyes had been won to help him, but to help him alone. And he said to her, "Who will show the way of escape to the others?"

"Ah," said the Princess Ariadne, "for the others there is no way of escape."

"Then," said Theseus, "I will not leave the youths and maidens of Athens to be devoured by the Minotaur."

"Ah, Theseus," said Ariadne, "they cannot escape the Minotaur. One only may escape, and I want you to be that one. I saw you when you were wrestling, and since then I have longed to save you."

"I will slay the Minotaur," said Theseus. "I cannot hold my life my own until I have slain that monster."

"I think that only Talos, the giant who is all of bronze and who guards our island, could slay the Minotaur," said Ariadne. "If you could see the monster, if you could measure his power and his appetite, you would know that you are not the one to slay him."

"Help me, princess," said Theseus, "help me to look upon the Minotaur, so that I shall know that the monster cannot be slain by me. And help me to get back the sword that I brought with me to Crete."

"Your sword will not avail you against the Minotaur. When you look upon the monster you will know that."

"But bring me my sword, princess."

"I will bring you your sword."

She took up a little lamp and she went through a doorway. Then after a little while she came back, the great, ivory-hilted sword in her hands.

"It is a great sword. I marked it before because it was your sword. But even this

great sword will not avail you against the Minotaur."

"Show me the way to come to the Minotaur, O Ariadne."

She took his hand and led him from the chamber of Minos. She was not tall, but she stood straight and walked steadily, and Theseus saw in her something of the strange majesty that he had seen in Minos the King.

They came to high gates that opened into a vault. "Here," said Ariadne, "the Labyrinth begins. Very devious is the Labyrinth in which the Minotaur is hidden, and without a clue none could find their way through the passages. I will give you a clue so that you may look upon the Minotaur—look upon him—for you are stubborn, Theseus—and then return to me. Now I put into your hands the clue of thread that will guide you through the winding ways of the Labyrinth."

She gave him a thread. Then holding the thread and holding his great sword he went along a wide passage. It was dark. He turned; he went into a passage that was very long. He came to a place in this passage where a door seemed to be. Within a doorway frame there was only a blank wall. Suddenly he slipped down upon steps. The thread guided him on. He came to places that he knew he had come to before, but still the thread guided him on. He was dazed by turnings; he was made breathless by quick descents. He came into a

wide, empty place that had doors to the right hand and doors to the left hand. Here the thread had its end. It was fastened to a cone that was upon the ground. Beside this cone was another one, and on this other was the thread that would bring him back.

Then did Theseus know that he was in the very center of the Labyrinth. Then did he prepare himself for sight of the Minotaur. There was no sight of the monster, no sign of him. He went to all the doors and pushed at them. Some opened and some did not open. The middle door opened. As it opened Theseus felt a chilling draft of air.

That chilling draft came from the breathing of the monster. Then Theseus saw the Minotaur.

It lay on the ground. It was a strange bull-faced thing. And when the thought came to him that he would have to fight that monster alone and in that hidden and empty place, all delight left Theseus; he grew like a stone; he groaned, and it seemed to him that he heard the voice of Ariadne calling him back. He could find his way through the Labyrinth; he could come to where she was, and he could escape from all this danger and all this dread. He stepped back, and the door closed on the Minotaur, the dread monster of Crete.

Then Theseus told himself that he was safe and that he need never again look upon the dread

monster. It was within there, and he was outside and away from it. And then, in an instant, he pushed the door open again. For he thought that the best thing that could ever be in the world would be that he could face the Minotaur and fight with it.

He stood within the hall where the Minotaur was. He looked again on that dark, bull-faced thing. It reared up—it reared up as a horse rears. Theseus saw that it would crash down on him and tear him with its dragon claws.

He leaped away from it. Then, when it stood still, he drew near the monster, his sword in his hand. He saw its thick lips and its slobbering mouth; he saw that its skin was thick and hard. He struck at its eyes, and his sword made a great dent. From its mouth and nostrils came a draught that covered him with a chilling slime.

It rushed at him. Theseus felt its terrible weight upon him. He thrust his sword upward and it reared away. No blood came from the wound he had given it, for the Minotaur was a bloodless monster.

It drew itself away from him, and even as it did Theseus rushed upon it and struck it with his sword. And now a great anger came upon him—anger at the thought of all the youths and maidens of Athens that it had destroyed and all of them that it would destroy if he did not slay it now.

It clawed at him and tore him; it opened wide its most evil mouth as if to draw him into it. He struck at it where its eyes were; he thrust after he had struck; he thrust his great sword through its neck, and he left the sword there.

The strength that had come into his arms as he had thrust the sword was greater than he thought he possessed, for the skin of the Minotaur was thick and horny. It reeled about the hall; it fell down and breathed with great gasps. Then, with the last of his strength Theseus pulled open the heavy door and went from the hall where the Minotaur was.

On he went, through passage after passage, through chamber after chamber. His wounds, and the chill the Minotaur had breathed into him, and the horror he had of the bloodless monster, made his mind almost forsake him. He had taken into his hand the thread that could guide him back to where he had left Ariadne, but he stumbled and the thread broke in his hand. He walked a long way; he crossed where his own footsteps were in the dust. At last he pushed open a door and came into the open air. He was now on the outside wall of the palace. He saw birds flying by him. He leaned against the wall, and he thought that he could not move from where he leaned.

Now while he was there, lying against the wall for the whole of a day, the youths and maidens of

Athens were brought through the Labyrinth and into the hall where the Minotaur was. They went through the passages weeping and lamenting. Some cried out for Theseus, and some said that Theseus had deserted them. The heavy door was opened. The Minotaur was there. But it was lying stark and stiff, with Theseus's sword through its neck. Those who were with the youths and maidens shouted and blew trumpets, and the noise of the shouting and of the trumpets blown filled the Labyrinth. Then they turned back. The rumor went all through the palace that the Minotaur had been slain, and the dwellers in the palace and their attendants looked at each other full of the strangeness of the thing that had happened.

Even then Theseus, wearied and overcome, was sleeping by the wall of the palace. He wakened up with the feeling that the claw of the Minotaur was upon him. There were stars in the sky above the palace wall. A dark-faced servant was standing by him. He laid his hand upon Theseus and looked him full in the face. Then, as if he knew that Theseus was the one he had been searching for, he led him down a winding stairway and into a chamber where there were three maidens. One started up and came to him quickly, and Theseus again saw Ariadne.

She hid him in the chamber. The next day at sunset she brought him to the roof of the palace

and showed him the harbor with its ships. She showed him the ship with the black sail that had brought him to Knossos, and she told him she would take him aboard that ship; she told him, too, she would bring to the ship's master the seal of King Minos, and that he, seeing that seal, would sail to whatever place Theseus desired to go.

One evening she led him into the palace gardens. He waited there, and the youths and maidens of Athens were led into the gardens, all wearing cloaks that hid their forms and faces. They went to the harbor and Ariadne went with them. She brought with her the seal of her father, King Minos.

And when they came on board the black-sailed ship she showed the seal to the master. He let the sail take the breeze of the evening, and so Theseus went away from Crete with the youths and maidens of Athens. But Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos, he left behind on the island of Naxos.

And all this time the father of Theseus, King Ægeus, was watching out for his return. He stayed on the tower of his palace watching for the ship that had sailed with the black sail. The life of the King had wasted since the departure of Theseus, and now it was but a thread. And every day, watching from the tower, he hoped against hope that he would see a white sail.

Then a ship came into the harbor. It had a black sail. Ægeus did not know that Theseus was aboard it. And Theseus, in the hurry of his flight and in the sadness of his parting from Ariadne, had not thought of taking out the white sail his father had given to the master of the ship. Ægeus saw the black sail and then and there his life went from him.

Joyously Theseus sailed into the harbor. He had slain the Minotaur, and had brought back to their own people the youths and maidens who had been taken away, and, more than all this, he had lifted for ever the tribute put upon Athens. Joyously he sailed into the harbor. He landed in his own country. He sent messengers to the city to announce his return.

But when they came to the gate, these joyful messengers, they heard the sounds of mourning and lamentation. Soon they went back to where Theseus stood upon the beach. They brought a wreath of victory for him. But even as they put it on his head they told him of the death of his father. Then Theseus laid the wreath upon the ground and he wept for the death of Ægeus—Ægeus, the hero who had left the sword under the stone before he, Theseus, was born.

The men and women who came to the beach laughed and wept as they clasped the children who had been brought back to them. And Theseus

stood there, silent and bowed; the memory of his last moments with his father, of his fight with the Minotaur, of his parting with Ariadne, all flowed back upon him. He stood with his head bowed. But the people called upon him, naming him their King. Then he lifted up the wreath and put it upon his head, taking up in that way the kingship they offered him, and he looked upon the ship with the black sail that would never more sail from Athens.

*"The Golden Fleece and the Heroes Who Lived Before Achilles," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Willy Pogany. The Macmillan Company, 1921.*

# THE STORY OF SIGURD

## THE DRAGON SLAYER

Once upon a time there was a treasure that was the greatest of the world's treasures. Deep under the flowing water it lay, a treasure of jewels and gold, and the River Maidens guarded it. From their keeping it was stolen. Afterward many coveted the stolen treasure, and many were killed for its sake. And then the treasure that the River Maidens had guarded came to be laid in a cave; a fierce and destructive dragon kept guard over it there.

Still many coveted it, and many sought to gain it. But no one could come near where it was on account of the fierceness of Fafnir, the dragon

that guarded it. And then a youth named Sigurd, who cared nothing for the riches that were in the cave, but who hated Fafnir because of his destructiveness toward men, slew the dragon. He slew him with a sword that had been forged for him by one who kept near to where the dragon and the hoard were—by a dwarf; this dwarf also showed Sigurd the way to come to Fafnir and the way to drive the sword through his scaly body.

When the dragon had been slain according to the way he had shown him, the dwarf came to Sigurd. "Thou hast now to do something for me," he said to the youth. "With the sword thou hast, cut through the dragon and take his heart out for me; roast it then that I may eat of it and become wiser than I am." Sigurd did as the dwarf bade him. He cut the heart out and he hung it from stakes to roast. And then he stood in a dell in the forest doing the strangest thing that a youth had ever done there—roasting the heart of a dragon he had slain.

He stood before the fire, putting wood upon it, and there was great silence in the forest. He put his hand down that he might place an ashen brand that was in the middle of the fire. As he did this a drop from the roasting dragon heart fell upon his hand. The drop burned into him. He put his hand to his mouth to ease the smart. His tongue tasted the burning blood of the dragon.

Then Sigurd went to gather more wood for the fire. In a clearing which he came to there were birds: he saw four on a branch together. They spoke to each other in birds' notes; he heard them, and because he had tasted the drop of blood from the dragon's heart, Sigurd understood what the birds were saying.

Said the first bird, "How simple is he, the youth who has come into this dell! He has no thought of an enemy, and yet the one who was with him a while ago has gone away so that he may bring a spear to slay him with!"

The second bird said, "The one who told him to cut out and roast the dragon's heart would slay him."

And the third bird said, "For the sake of the treasure that is in the cave which the dragon guarded the dwarf would slay the youth who slew the dragon."

The fourth bird said, "This youth has tasted a drop of the blood from the dragon's heart and he knows what we are saying. But whoever would eat of the dragon's heart would know all wisdom."

Then suddenly the notes of the birds became shrill and piercing. "Look, look!" said one. The other said, "He is coming against the youth with a spear." And another said, "Now will the youth be slain unless he is swift."

Sigurd turned around. He saw creeping toward

him, grim and silent, the dwarf who had forged the sword for him and who had shown him how to slay the dragon. A spear was in his hand. That spear would have gone through him if Sigurd had stayed an instant longer in the place where he had been listening to the sayings of the birds. As he turned he had the sword in his hand; he flung it, and the dwarf fled away.

Then, that he might eat the dragon's heart and become the wisest of men, he went to the place where he had left it roasting. But he did not eat of the dragon's heart. For when he came to the dell he found that the fire had burned it utterly—there was none of the dragon's heart left for him to eat.

He called to his horse. And Grani, his proud horse, heard, in the place where he had been left, Sigurd's call. He came galloping to him, his mane flowing and his eyes flashing fire. Then Sigurd sat upon his horse and looked upon the dragon's terrible bulk and upon the field they had fought over: the dragon had torn up the rocks with its talons; it lay upon the ground, and the pit in which its head lay was filled with its venom. In that pit, dead, was the dwarf who had fled from him.

Then Sigurd stood before the treasure that the River Maidens had once guarded and that had been reft from them in the far-off days. There it

was as Fafnir the Dragon had kept it—masses of gold and heaps of shining jewels. Not all of its history did Sigurd know. But, as he stood there and looked upon the gleaming and glittering heap, a shadow of the curse that had lain upon the hoard since it had been reft from the River Maidens touched his spirit. He became troubled at the thought of how his friends and helpers might become overweening if he brought to them all that riches.

Sigurd did not fear to leave it unguarded; the dwarf who had planned to possess himself of the hoard was dead, and the youth knew the fear that Fafnir had put into the hearts of the folk—it would keep them far from the cave the dragon had watched over. He would leave the hoard almost as it was, taking from it only such things as he himself might wear. A helmet of gold was there; he took it and put it upon his head. He found a great arm ring and he put it upon his arm. On the top of the arm ring there was a little ring; it was a finger ring which had engraved upon it a rune or magical line. Sigurd took the ring and put it upon his finger. And this was the ring that had been flung upon the heap when the gold was cursed for the first time.

Now Sigurd sat upon Grani, his proud horse, with the golden helmet upon his head, the best and the most beautiful of youthful warriors. And as

he sat upon his horse he heard again the speech of the birds and he understood it. They were telling of a marvelous abode that was known to them. Deep in the forest, the birds sang, was a house that was called the House of Flame. All round that house there was a circle of fire through which none might pass. And within the house a maiden slept, and she was the wisest and the bravest, as well as the most beautiful maiden in the world.

Sigurd sat upon his horse like a man enchanted and he listened to what the birds said. The green of the forest was now more to him than the glitter of the treasure heap. He would seek the House of Flame where she lay sleeping, the maiden who was the wisest and the most beautiful in the world. With his golden helmet shining above his golden hair Sigurd rode on.

The forest ways led him on and up a mountain-side. He came to a mountain summit at last. The forest trees fell away, leaving a place open to the sky and the winds. Sigurd saw the walls of a house; they were black and high, and all around them was a ring of fire.

As he rode nearer he heard the roar of the mounting and circling fire. For long, sitting on Grani, his proud horse, he looked on the black walls and the flame that went circling around them. Then he rode Grani toward the fire. An-

other horse would have been affrighted, but Grani remained steady under Sigurd. To the wall of fire they came, and Sigurd, who knew no fear, rode through it.

He came into the courtyard of the house. No stir was there of man, or hound, or horse. Sigurd dismounted and bade Grani keep still. He opened a door and he saw a chamber. On a couch in the center of the chamber one lay in slumber. Upon the head was a helmet, and across the breast was a breastplate. Sigurd took the helmet off the head. Then over the couch fell a heap of woman's hair—wondrous, bright-gleaming hair. This was the maiden whom the birds had told him of.

He cut the fastening of the breastplate with his sword. He gazed long upon her. Beautiful was her face, but stern, like the face of one who subdues but may not be subdued. Beautiful and strong were her arms and her hands. Her mouth was proud, and over her closed eyes there were strong and beautiful brows.

Her eyes opened; she turned and looked full upon Sigurd. "Who art thou who hast awakened me?" she said.

"I am Sigurd of the Volsung race," he answered.

"And thou didst ride through the ring of fire to me?"

"That did I."

She knelt on the couch and stretched her arms to where the light shone. "Hail, O wide-spreading fields of the world of men," she prayed. "May ye give us wisdom, and wise speech, and grant that nothing untrue or unbrave may come near to us!"

She prayed with her eyes opened wide; they were eyes that had in them all the blue that Sigurd had ever seen: the blue of flowers, the blue of skies, the blue of battle blades. She turned those great eyes upon him, and she said, "I am Brynhild, once an immortal, but now a mortal maiden, who will know death and all the sorrows that mortal woman knows." She told Sigurd how she had disobeyed the will of Odin, the Father of the Gods. For that she had been made a mortal woman and sent down into the world. Odin had put into her flesh the thorn of the Tree of Sleep, so that she might remain in slumber until one who was the bravest of mortal men should awaken her. Whoever would break the fastenings of her breastplate would take out the Thorn of Sleep. "Odin granted me this," she told Sigurd, "that as a mortal maid I should wed none but him who is the bravest in the world. And so that none but him might come to me, the Father of the Gods put the fire ring round where I lay in slumber. And it is thou, Sigurd, who hast come to me. Thou art the

bravest, and I think that thou art the most beautiful too."

Sigurd laid his sword Gram at her feet. He said her name, "Brynhild." He told her how he had slain Fafnir the Dragon, and how he had heard the birds tell of her in the House of Flame. She rose from her couch and she bound her wondrous hair around her head. In wonder he watched her. When she moved it was as though she walked above the earth.

They talked to each other fondly, and the day flowed by them. Then Sigurd heard Grani, his proud horse, neigh for him; the horse neighed again and again. He cried to Brynhild, "Let me go from the gaze of thine eyes. I am the one who is to have the greatest name in the world. Not yet have I made my name as great as my father's name. I have slain Fafnir the Dragon, but that is little. I would make my name the greatest in the world, and endure all that is to be endured in making it so. Then would I come back to thee in thy House of Flame, Brynhild."

Brynhild said to him, "Well dost thou speak. Make thy name great and endure what is to be endured in making it so. I will wait for thee. Whoever rides through the flame and claims me for his wife, him will I have to wed. But I know that none but Sigurd will be able to win through the fire that guards me."

They gazed long on each other, but little more they spoke. Then they held each other's hands in farewell, and they plighted faith, promising each other that they would take no other for their mate. And as token of this troth Sigurd took the ring that was on his finger and placed it on Brynhild's finger—it was the ring he had taken from the treasure heap. And when his horse neighed again, he went from the house, and rode back through the wall of flame.

## THE DEATH OF SIGURD

When he heard the birds speak again and knew what they were saying, Sigurd was in another country. He had come into a land that was ruled over by a people who were called the Nibelungs. Now, one day as he rode through that country, he heard the birds, and one was singing, "There is Sigurd who wears the wondrous helmet that he took out of Fafnir's hoard." "He is dead, he is dead," he heard another bird say, "dead because of Fafnir's hoard." "It is of Fafnir the bird is speaking," Sigurd said to himself, "he does not prophesy of my death because of the hoard."

The other birds said, "He knows not that by means of the helmet he got from the hoard he can change his shape as Fafnir changed his shape, and make himself like this or that creature, this or that human being." And a third bird said, "He does not know that he wears a helmet by which he can do such wonderful things." "To change my shape—that would be to come close to death," said Sigurd to himself. Then he who had been in many battles, and who had hardly thought upon death in the midst of any of them, thought upon it now as he rode in the sunlight. He

thought upon death and upon Fafnir's hoard. And he would have gone then to the House of Flame where Brynhild was, and would have taken her away and into lands where men lived and stirred, were it not that he had promised to give help to men who were his sworn brothers before he left that land.

He had come down from Hindfell upon which was the House of Flame, and he had come into the country that was ruled over by the Nibelungs. The King and Queen of that land, and the sons of the King and Queen, had made him welcome as he came into their hall, for Sigurd looked such a one as might win the name of being the world's greatest hero. And Sigurd had gone to war beside the King's two sons, and the three had made great names for themselves. But Sigurd's name shone high above the others.

Sigurd's heart was filled with friendship for all the Nibelung race; he had love for the King's sons, Gunnar and Hogni, and with these two young men he swore oaths of brotherhood. Now, after he had heard what the birds said, he rode back to the Hall of the Nibelungs, and at the supper board he told them of the magic he possessed through his helmet. Also he told them of how he had slain Fafnir the Dragon, and of how he had won for himself the mighty hoard that Fafnir had

guarded. His two sworn brothers rejoiced that he had such wondrous possessions.

But of Brynhild in the House of Flame he did not speak. More precious than the hoard and more wondrous than the helmet was the memory of Brynhild that he had.

The King and Queen of the Nibelungs had one daughter whose name was Gudrun. Now the Queen was the wisest of women, and she knew when she had looked upon him that Sigurd was the world's greatest warrior. She would have him belong to the Nibelungs; she would have him belong to them not only by the oaths of brotherhood he had sworn with Gunnar and Hogni, but by other ties. She made it her heart's purpose that Sigurd should wed Gudrun, her daughter. But neither Sigurd nor the maiden Gudrun knew the purpose of her heart.

The Queen, watching him closely, knew that Sigurd had a remembrance in his breast that held him from seeing Gudrun's loveliness. And she had a knowledge of spells and secret brews, and she was able to make a potion that would destroy the memory that Sigurd held.

She mixed the potion. Then, one night when there was feasting in the Hall of the Nibelungs, she gave the cup that held the potion into the hands of Gudrun, her daughter, and bade her carry it to Sigurd.

Sigurd took the cup out of the hands of the fair Nibelung maiden, and he drank the potion. When he had drunk it he put the cup down, and he stood among the feasters like a man in a dream. Or rather like a man whose spirit had come close to death. For a day and a night afterward he was silent and his mind was astray. When he rode with Gunnar and Hogni they would say to him, "What is it thou hast lost, brother?" Sigurd was not able to tell them. What he had lost was all memory of Brynhild the Valkyrie in the House of Flame.

And then he became like a man who was winning back to life from a place that was close to death. He saw Gudrun, and it was as though he had looked upon her for the first time. Soft were the tresses of her hair, soft were her hands. Her eyes were like wood flowers, and her ways and her speech were gentle. Yet she was noble in her bearing as became a princess who would one day have a kingdom to rule over. And from the first time she had seen him upon Grani, his proud horse, and with the golden helmet above his golden hair, Gudrun had loved Sigurd.

At the season when the wild swans came to the lake, Gudrun went down to watch them build their nests. While she was there Sigurd rode through the pines. He saw her, and her beauty made the whole place change. He stopped his horse and

listened to her voice as she sang to the wild swans —she sang the song that Volund had made for Alvit, his swan bride.

No more was Sigurd's heart empty of memory: it was filled with the memory of Gudrun as he saw her by the lake when the wild swans were building their nests. And now he watched her in the hall, sitting with her mother and spinning, or serving her father and her brothers, and a tenderness for the maiden grew in his heart.

A day came when he asked Gunnar and Hogni, his sworn brothers, for Gudrun. They were glad at his asking as though a great fortune had come to them. They brought him before the King and Queen. It seemed as if they had cast off all trouble and had entered into the prime of their life and power, so greatly did the King and Queen rejoice at Sigurd's becoming one of the Nibelungs through marriage with Gudrun.

And when Gudrun heard that Sigurd had asked for her, she said to the Queen, "Oh, my mother, your wisdom should have strengthened me to bear such joy! How can I show him that he is so dear, so dear to me? But I shall not try to show it, for he might deem that there was no sense in me but sense to love him. So great a warrior should not care for such love."

Sigurd and Gudrun were wed and all the kingdom that the Nibelungs ruled over rejoiced over

it. And the Queen thought that even if the effect of the potion she had given him wore away, his love for Gudrun would ever fill his heart, and that no other memory would be able to find a place there.

He did not remember, not even when he came to Hindfell, and had sight of the black walls with the mounting and circling fire around them. No memory had Sigurd of the place. He came there with Gunnar and Hogni, his sworn brothers, for Gunnar had heard of the maiden in the House of Flame, and was eager to win her. With the light of eagerness upon his stolid face Gunnar went forward to ride through the ring of fire. He brought his horse near the flame, but the horse, for no urging, would go through it. Then Gunnar thought that mounted upon Grani, Sigurd's horse, he could ride through the ring of fire. He mounted Grani and came near to the flaming wall. But Grani, knowing that the one who rode him had fear of the fire, reared up and would not go through it. Only with Sigurd on his back would he go through the flame.

Then were the three sworn brothers greatly troubled. After they had considered it, Hogni, the wisest of the King's sons, said, "There is this that we can do: Sigurd can change his shape by the magic of his helmet; let him change his shape for Gunnar's shape. Then Sigurd can ride Grani

through the wall of flame and win Brynhild for Gunnar."

So Hogni said. But to Sigurd the words of Hogni seemed to be the words of a man who was speaking to him of his death! He knew that to change his shape would be to change his life, bringing him in some way close to death. But he saw his sworn brother's gaze fixed upon him in pleading. Then Sigurd could not but agree to ride through the flame and come to the maiden within in the way that Hogni said. By the magic of his helmet he changed shapes with Gunnar. And Grani, knowing that the one he bore was without fear, went through the flaring fire. And so Sigurd came into the courtyard of the House of Flame. He dismounted from Grani; he bade his horse be still.

He went within the Hall; he saw one with a bow in her hands shooting at a mark. She turned to him, and he saw a beautiful and stern face, with coils of wondrous, bright-gleaming hair, and eyes that were like stars in an unventured-in sea. She threw down the bow and came to him, and her walk was of one who moves above the earth. When she came near and looked at him she uttered a cry.

"Who art thou?" she said. "Who art thou who has come to me through the wall of flaring fire?"

"I am Gunnar, the son of Giuki, of the race of the Nibelungs," Sigurd said.

"Art thou the bravest one in the world?" she asked.

"I have ridden through the wall of flaring fire to come to thee," Sigurd answered.

"He who has come through the wall of flaring fire may claim me," Brynhild said. "It is written in the runes, and it must be so. But I thought there was only one who would come to me through the fire." She looked at him and her eyes had a flame of anger. "Oh, I would strive with thee with warrior weapons," she cried. Then Sigurd felt her strong hands upon him, and he knew that she was striving to throw him.

They wrestled, and each was so strong that neither could move the other. They wrestled, Sigurd the first of heroes, and Brynhild the Valkyrie. Sigurd got her hand in his in the wrestle. On that hand was a ring, and Sigurd bent back the finger and drew it off. It was the ring that had the curse of the hoard upon it, the ring he had placed upon her finger. When that ring was taken off, Brynhild sank down on her knees like one who was strengthless.

Then Sigurd lifted her in his arms and carried her to where Grani, his horse, was waiting. He lifted her across the horse, and he mounted behind her, and again he rode through the wall of flame.

Hogni and Gunnar were waiting, Gunnar in Sigurd's shape. Brynhild did not look upon them; she had covered her face with her hands.

Sigurd took his own shape; he rode before Gunnar and Hogni to the Hall of the Nibelungs. He went within, and he found Gudrun, his wife, playing with Sigmund, his little son; he sat beside her and he told her of all that had befallen: how, for the sake of his sworn brotherliness, he had won Brynhild for Gunnar, and how he had striven with her and had overcome her, and had taken the ring off her finger—the ring that he now had upon his own.

And even as he spoke to his wife the fume of the potion that Gudrun's mother had given him was wearing off, and he had memories of going to the House of Flame on a day that was not this day, and of riding through the wall of fire in his own shape. And again, as on the night when he drank the potion that Queen Grimhild had brewed, he became as one whose wits were astray. He stood watching the child as it played, and his wife as she worked at her spinning, and he was again as a man in a dream.

And while he was standing there Gunnar and Hogni came into the Hall of the Nibelungs bringing Brynhild with them. Gudrun rose up to welcome her who came as her brother's bride. Then did Sigurd look on Brynhild and then did he re-

member all. And when he remembered, such a mighty sigh rose from his heart that it burst the links of the mail that was across his breast.

It happened once that Brynhild, Gunnar's wife, now a Queen, was with Sigurd's wife, bathing in a river. Not often were they together. Brynhild was the haughtiest of women, and often she treated Gudrun with disdain. Now as they were bathing together, Gudrun, shaking out her hair, cast some drops upon Brynhild. Brynhild went from Gudrun. And Sigurd's wife, not knowing that Brynhild had anger against her, went after her up the stream.

"Why dost thou go so far up the river, Brynhild?" Gudrun asked.

"So that thou mayst not shake thy hair over me," answered Brynhild.

Gudrun stood still while Brynhild went up the river like a creature who was made to be alone. "Why dost thou speak so to me, sister?" Gudrun cried.

She remembered that from the first Brynhild had been haughty with her, often speaking to her with harshness and bitterness. She did not know what cause Brynhild had for doing this.

It was because Brynhild had seen in Sigurd the one who had ridden through the fire for the first time, he who had awakened her by breaking the

binding of her breastplate. She had given him her love when she awakened on the world. But he, as she thought, had forgotten her easily, giving his love to this other woman. Brynhild, with her Valkyrie's pride, was left with a mighty anger in her heart.

"Why dost thou speak to me so, Brynhild, sister?"

"It would be ill indeed for drops from thy hair to fall on one who is so much above thee, one who is King Gunnar's wife."

"Thou art married to a King, but not to one more valorous than my lord," was what Gudrun said to her then.

"Gunnar is more valorous; why dost thou compare Sigurd with him?" Brynhild said.

"He slew the Dragon Fafnir, and he won for himself Fafnir's hoard."

"Who knows that he slew the Dragon in truth?"

"It was Sigurd who rode through the ring of fire. He rode through it in Gunnar's shape. He took the ring off thy finger then. Look! It is now on mine."

And Gudrun held out her hand on which was the ring that Sigurd had first put on and had taken off Brynhild's finger. Then Brynhild knew, all at once, that what Gudrun said was true. It was Sigurd who had ridden through the ring of fire the second as well as the first time. It was he

who had struggled with her, taking the ring off her hand and claiming her for a bride, not for himself but for another, and out of disdain of her.

Wroth, then, was Brynhild. Falsely had she been won—she, one of Odin's Valkyries, she had been wed to one who was not the bravest hero in the world; she to whom no untruth might come had been deceived. She was silent before Gudrun, and all the pride that was in her turned to hatred of Sigurd.

She went to Gunnar, her husband; she told him that she had been so deeply shamed that she could never be glad in his Hall again; she told him that never again would he see her drinking wine, nor embroidering with golden threads, and never would he hear her speaking words of kindness. And when she said this to him she rent the web she was weaving, and she wept aloud, and all in the Hall heard her, and marveled to hear the proud Queen cry.

Then Sigurd came to her, and offered her in atonement the whole of Fafnir's hoard. And he told her how forgetfulness of her had come upon him, and he begged her to forgive him for winning her in falseness. She answered him, "Too late hast thou come to me, Sigurd. Now I have only a great anger in my heart."

There was one in the Hall of the Nibelungs who had not sworn brotherhood with Sigurd. He was

Guttrom, Gunnar's and Hogni's half-brother. Brynhild went to Guttrom. She asked him to slay Sigurd. Guttrom would not slay Sigurd, but Brynhild found that he was infirm of will and unsteady of thought. For the slaying of Sigurd she worked upon Guttrom: she and Sigurd would no longer be in the world of men—her mind was fixed upon that thought.

She made a dish of madness for Guttrom—serpent's venom and wolf's flesh were mixed in it—and when he had eaten it Guttrom became crazed. Then did he listen to Brynhild's words. And when Sigurd was crossing the river by the stones, he dashed upon him, and stabbed him through his body with a sword. Into the river out of which Fafnir's hoard had come, Sigurd's body fell.

Brynhild, knowing what deed had been done, went to where Grani, Sigurd's proud horse, was standing. She stayed there with her arm across Grani's neck. And Grani stood listening for some sound. He heard the cries of Gudrun over Sigurd, and his heart burst, and he died.

They bore Sigurd's body up from the river, and Brynhild went beside where they placed him. There the life went from her. She had been made a mortal woman for her disobedience to the will of Odin, and she had been won to be a mortal's wife by falseness. She died, and they took Sigurd

and his horse, Grani, and his helmet and his golden war gear, and they left all on a great painted ship. They left Brynhild, too, beside him, for they could not do otherwise—Brynhild with her wondrous hair and her stern and beautiful face. They left the two together, and they launched the ship on the sea. And when the ship was upon the water they fired it, and the flames rose up, and Brynhild once more lay with flames around her.

Gunnar and Hogni came to dread the evil that was in the hoard that Sigurd had brought to their treasure house. They took the gleaming and glittering mass, and they brought it to the river where Andvari, the Dwarf who had forced the River Maidens to give him the treasure, once had his cave. From a rock in the river they cast into the water the jewels and the gold. The hoard of Andvari sank for ever beneath the waves. Then the River Maidens again had possession of the treasure they had once owned.

*"The Children of Odin: The Children's Book of Northern Myths," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Willy Pogany. The Macmillan Company, 1920.*

# A DREAM ABOUT KING ARTHUR

Once upon a time certain men, journeying through the country that is now called Wales, went into a house there. No sooner had they gone into it than there arose a storm of wind and rain outside, so that it was hardly possible for them to go forth in safety. Being wearied with their journey, they wanted to go to sleep, but it seemed hardly possible for them even to lie down there, so comfortless was the house.

The house, as they saw when they had come to it, was old and very black; it had an upright gable out of which came a great smoke. When they went inside they found the floor full of puddles and mounds, and difficult to stand on, so slippery was it with the mire of cattle. There were boughs of holly spread over the floor. And when the men went into the house they found an old hag there; she was making a fire of the holly boughs, and whenever she felt cold she cast a lapful of chaff upon the fire, and this raised up such a smoke that it was hard to be borne by the men who came in. There was a bed there, and at the other side of the house there was a skin spread upon the floor —a yellow calfskin.

When the men went over to the bed and looked on it, they saw it was made of coarse straw full of dust and vermin. The holly boughs which had been left upon the ground were sticking up through it, for the cattle had eaten the straw that had been put at the head and the foot of the bed. And upon it was stretched an old rug, threadbare and ragged, and a coarse sheet full of slits, and an ill-stuffed pillow, with a worn-out cover over the sheet. All the men but one lay down upon this bed, and after suffering much from all that was in it to give them discomfort, they fell into a heavy sleep.

But the chief of the men who were there, a man whose name was Ronabbway, could not sleep upon that bed. All day he and his men had journeyed through the land that King Arthur had lived in when he ruled over Britain, and he had heard men talk about King Arthur. At that time there were many in that land who believed that Arthur would return and be King over the Britons once more. But there were none who knew what semblance Arthur and his companions had, or whether they were like or unlike the men of the times that were then. For long before that time Arthur had fought the Battle of Camlan—he had fought it against Medraud, his nephew. And Arthur had gained the victory, but he had received from Medraud a mortal wound, and what had happened

to him thereafter had never been known to the men of Britain. The wounded Arthur had vanished, and the crown of Britain had gone to the son of the Earl of Cornwall, Arthur's kinsman.

The storm of wind and rain went on outside; now and again the hag threw a lapful of chaff upon the fire and filled the house with bitter smoke. Ronabbway went to the skin that was upon the floor, to the yellow calfskin, and he stretched himself upon it. And sleep came upon Ronabbway as he lay upon that calfskin.

As soon as sleep came upon his eyes, it seemed to Ronabbway that he was journeying with his companions across a plain, and he thought that he went toward the River Severn. And as he journeyed he heard a mighty noise, and looking behind him he beheld a youth mounted on a chestnut horse. He wore a coat of yellow satin sewn with green silk, and on his thigh was a gold-hilted sword, with a scabbard of the leather of Cordoba, belted with the skin of a deer, and clasped with gold. He had on a scarf of yellow satin wrought with green silk, the borders of which were green. And the green of the caparison of the horse and the green of the rider's dress was as the green of the leaves of the fir tree, and the yellow was as the blossom of the broom.

Now as the youth came toward them his aspect was so fierce that fear seized upon Ronabbway,

and he and his companions began to flee before him. The youth pursued them. And each time as his horse drew in his breath, the men who were fleeing from him were drawn near him. And when they were drawn back even to his horse's chest, they besought mercy from the youth. "You shall have it," said he, "fear nought." "Since thou hast mercy upon us, tell us also who thou art," said Ronabbway. "I am Iddog, but not by my name, but by my nickname, am I best known." "And wilt thou tell us what thy nickname is?" "I will tell thee, but I will tell thee after this."

All this was in the dream Ronabbway dreamt, lying upon the yellow calfskin in the house that he and his companions had come to. And in his dream he and his companions journeyed with the youth over the plain and as far as a ford on the Severn River. There, for a mile around the ford on both sides of the road, they saw tents and encampments, and there was a clamor of a mighty host. And there Ronabbway beheld Arthur, the King still remembered by the Britons.

And in Ronabbway's dream, he and his companions and the youth whom they had come with stood before King Arthur. "Heaven grant thee good," said King Arthur to the youth whom they had come with. "Where didst thou find these little men?" "I found them, Lord, up yonder on the road," said the youth.

Then King Arthur smiled. "I laugh not," said King Arthur, "but it pitieth me that men so small as these should have the Island of Britain in their keeping, after the men who guarded it in my time." Then said the youth who had come with them, speaking to Ronabbway, "Dost thou see the ring with the stone set in it that is upon the King's hand?" "I see it," he answered. "It is one of the properties of that stone that it enables thee to remember what thou seest here to-night. Hadst thou not seen the stone, thou wouldst never have been able to remember anything of it."

Then Ronabbway saw Arthur sitting upon a golden chair that was placed upon a carpet: so large was the chair that three armed men might have sat in it, and the carpet on which the chair was placed was of diapered satin. A knight whom Ronabbway knew to be Owen, one of Arthur's companions, stood before him. "Owen," said King Arthur, "wilt thou play chess?" "I will, Lord," said Owen. And Arthur's servant, a red, rough, ill-favored man, who came mounted upon a tall red horse with the mane parted on each side, brought the board and the chess pieces for Arthur and Owen—golden were the chess pieces and the board was silver. And Arthur and Owen began to play, one against the other.

And while they were playing, behold, Ronabbway saw a young page come to the place where

Arthur and the knight Owen were playing chess. He bore a heavy, three-edged sword with a golden hilt, the scabbard of which was of black leather tipped with fine gold. And when he came to where the King and Owen were, he saluted Owen, and he said, "Lord, is it with thy leave that the young pages and attendants of the King harass and torment thy Ravens? And if it be not with thy leave, cause the King to forbid them." "Lord," said Owen to the King, "thou hearest what the youth says; if it seem good to thee, forbid them from my Ravens." "Play the game," said Arthur. They played, and the page went away from them.

That game did they finish, and another did they begin, and while they were in the middle of this game, behold, a ruddy young man with auburn curling hair and large eyes, well grown, and having his beard new-shorn, came forth from a bright yellow tent upon the top of which was the figure of a bright red lion. In his hand there was a heavy, three-edged sword that had a scabbard of deerskin tipped with gold. He came to the place where Arthur and Owen were playing chess. He saluted the knight Owen. And Owen was troubled that he did not salute the King, but the King was not troubled at all. The youth said to the knight Owen, "Is it not against thy will that the attendants of the King harass thy Ravens, killing some

and tormenting others? If against thy will, beseech him to forbid them." "Lord," said Owen to King Arthur, "forbid thy men, if it seem good to thee." "Play the game," said the King. And thereupon the youth went back to the tent.

That game ended and another game was begun. And as they were at the first move of the game Ronabbway beheld at a small distance from them a tent of speckled yellow, the largest ever seen, and the figure of an eagle of gold upon it, and a precious stone in the eagle's head. He saw coming out of the tent a youth with thick yellow hair upon his head, and a scarf of blue satin upon him, with a brooch of gold in the scarf. In the hand of the youth was a mighty lance, speckled yellow, with a newly sharpened head, and upon the lance a banner was displayed.

Fiercely angry, and with a rapid pace, came the youth to the place where King Arthur was playing chess with the knight Owen. They perceived that he was wroth. And thereupon the youth saluted Owen, but not Arthur, and he told Owen that his Ravens had been killed, the chief part of them, and that such of them as were not slain were so wounded and bruised that not one of them could raise his wings a single fathom above the earth. "Lord," said Owen, "forbid thy men." "Play," said Arthur, "if it please thee." Then said Owen, speaking to the youth, "Go back, and

wherever thou findest the strife at the thickest, there lift up the banner, and let come what please Heaven."

So the youth returned to the place where the strife bore hardest upon the Ravens, and he lifted up the banner. As he did so, the Ravens all rose up in the air, wrathful and fierce and high of spirit, clapping their wings in the wind and shaking off the weariness that was upon them. And recovering their vigor and courage, furiously and with exultation did they, with one sweep, descend upon the heads of the men who had erewhile caused them anger and pain and damage; they seized some by the heads, and some by the ears, and some by the arms, and carried them up into the air; and in the air there was a mighty tumult with the flapping of the wings of the triumphant Ravens and with their croakings, and there was another mighty tumult with the groaning of the men who were being torn and wounded, and some of whom were being slain.

Then Ronabbway, in his dream, perceived a knight coming toward the place where King Arthur and the knight Owen were. Bright red was his horse's right shoulder, and from the top of his legs to the center of his hoofs there was bright yellow. Both the knight and the horse were fully equipped with heavy armor; upon his thigh the knight had a large gold-hilted sword: the belt

of the sword was of dark green leather with golden slides and a clasp of ivory upon it, and a buckle of jet black upon the clasp. A helmet of gold was upon the head of the knight, set with precious stones of great virtue, and at the top of the helmet was an image of a flame-colored leopard with two ruby-red stones in its head. He had in his hand a blue-shafted lance, and from the haft to the point the lance was stained crimson red with the blood of the Ravens.

The knight came to the place where the King and Owen were seated at chess. And they perceived that he was harassed and vexed and weary as he came toward them. He saluted Arthur, but not Owen, and he told them that the Ravens of Owen were slaying the King's attendants. And Arthur looked at Owen and said, "Forbid thy Ravens." "Lord," said Owen, "play the game." They played. And the knight returned back toward where the struggle was, and the Ravens were not forbidden any more than before.

Again they played for a while, and again they heard a mighty tumult, and a wailing of men and a croaking of Ravens, as in their strength the Ravens lifted men into the air, and, tearing them betwixt them, let them fall piecemeal to the earth. During the tumult they saw another knight coming toward them. He rode a light gray horse, and the left foreleg of the horse was jet black to

the center of the hoof. The knight and the horse were accoutered with huge, heavy blue armor. A robe of yellow satin was upon the knight, and the borders of the robe were blue. On the thigh of the knight was a sword, long, three-edged, and heavy. The scabbard was of red leather, and the belt of red deerskin, having upon it many golden slides and a buckle of the bone of the sea horse, the tongue of which was jet black. A golden helmet was upon the head of the knight, wherein were set sapphire stones of great virtue. At the top of the helmet was the figure of a flame-colored lion, with fiery-red tongue, and with venomous eyes in his head. And the knight came on, bearing in his hand a thick ashen lance, the head of which was overlaid with silver.

The knight saluted King Arthur, but he did not salute Owen, and he said, "Lord, carest thou not for the slaying of thy pages and thy young men, and the sons of the nobles of the Island of Britain?" "Owen," said Arthur, "forbid thy Ravens from the young men." "Play the game, Lord," said Owen.

They finished that game and they began another; and as they were finishing this next game, lo, they heard a great tumult and a clamor of armed men, and a croaking of Ravens, and a flapping of wings in the air, as the Ravens flung down the armor on the ground, and the men and

horses piecemeal. Then they saw coming toward them a knight on a lofty-headed piebald horse. The left shoulder of the horse was of bright red, and its right leg from the chest to the hollow of the hoof was pure white. The knight and horse were equipped with harness of speckled yellow. And over himself and his horse was a robe, divided into two parts, white and black, and the borders of the robe were of purple. He wore a sword three-edged and bright with a golden hilt. The belt of his sword was of yellow goldwork, having a clasp upon it of the eyelid of a black sea horse, with a tongue of yellow gold to the clasp. Upon the head of the knight was a bright helmet of yellow laton, with sparkling stones of crystal in it, and at the crest of the helmet was the figure of a griffin with a stone of many virtues in its head. The knight had an ashen spear in his hand, with a round shaft, colored with blue. And the head of the spear was newly stained with blood.

Wrathfully came the knight to the place where King Arthur and Owen sat, and he told him that Owen's Ravens had slain his household and the sons of the chief men of Britain, so that it would be difficult to defend the island from henceforth on account of the loss of the bravest of the young men, and he besought the King to cause Owen to forbid his Ravens. Then Arthur besought Owen to forbid them. And he took the golden chessmen

that were upon the board, and he crushed them till they became as dust. But he spoke no more to Owen. And Owen seeing how greatly moved the King was, ordered the one whom he had before sent to lower the banner. So the banner was lowered, and no more was there strife between Arthur's household and Owen's Ravens.

Thereupon Ronabbway heard a call being made for Arthur's sword bearer, and Arthur's sword bearer arose with the sword of Arthur in his hands. When that sword was drawn from its scabbard it seemed as if two flames of fire burst from the jaws of the two serpents that were upon the sword. And the great host that was assembled there became still, and all tumult ceased.

The mighty host moved forward, each troop in its order, and Iddog took Ronabbway behind him on his horse and they followed Arthur's army. And when they came to the middle of the ford of the River Severn, Iddog turned his horse's head and Ronabbway looked along the valley of the Severn. He beheld then two armies coming toward the ford. And he beheld a knight coming toward them, clad, both he and his horse, in mail, the rings of which were whiter than the whitest lily, and the rivets of which were redder than the reddest blood. "He is Kai," Iddog said.

Then Ronabbway heard Kai cry out: "Whoever will follow Arthur, let him be with him to-night

in Cornwall, and whosoever will not, let him be opposed to Arthur. For now the battle comes on."

Then Ronabbway turned to Iddog, and he said, "Wilt thou tell me what thy nickname is?" "I will tell thee," said his companion. "I am called the Stirrer-up of Britain. I was at the battle, the opening of which has been shown to thee. I was one of the messengers between Arthur and Medraud, Arthur's nephew. I was then a reckless youth, and through my desire for battle, I kindled strife between the two. I stirred up wrath when I was sent by Arthur to reason with Medraud and to seek for peace. And whereas Arthur charged me with the fairest sayings he could devise, I uttered to Medraud the harshest I could think of. And from this did the Battle of Camlan, the battle of which you have seen the opening, ensue. The nobles of the Island of Britain and the great companions of Arthur were slain in that battle, and an end was made of the court of Arthur. But a magic sleep fell upon King Arthur, and he stays within a hill. But he will come forth again when the Island of Britain is in danger, and he will deliver his people."

Then, once more, Ronabbway heard the voice of Kai saying, "Whosoever will follow Arthur, let him be with him to-night in Cornwall, and whosoever will not, let him be opposed to Arthur."

Then, through the greatness of the tumult that ensued, Ronabbway awoke. And when he awoke he was upon the yellow calfskin, and the men who had come with him were gone out of the house, and he had slept stretched upon the calfskin for three days and three nights.

*"The Island of the Mighty: Hero Tales of Celtic Britain," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Wilfred Jones. The Macmillan Company, 1924.*

# THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

In the sea into which Christopher Columbus had sailed there are seven hundred islands. One of the islands was named Bimini. But no one knew anything about Bimini except what was in a song.

Old soldiers, old seamen,
Are hunting the deer;
Their bodies are supple,
Though bent once they were.

Old women, old bodies,
Are dancing it there;
Their glances are sprightly,
Though their eyes once were blear.

O Fountain of Bimini,
Now I've won here,
Pride, grace, and youth give me
With your wa-ter—
Pride, grace, and youth give me
For many a year!

That song had gone through the seven hundred islands, and had gone all along the coast that is over against the seven hundred islands, the coast of Española. Often that song had been heard by Ponce de Leon, Ponce de Leon who was governor of Española.

A time came when he gave up his governorship. Then Ponce de Leon called together the people of Española who were most faithful to him. Speaking before all of them, he said:

"When Christopher Columbus sailed hither on his second voyage I sailed hither with him, and ever since that time I have been in Española. I have built roads and I have commanded armies; I have raised cities and I have meted out justice. I have gone afar, but always I have come back to Española. For this is the place from which we can look out upon the sea in which Bimini lies." Bimini! When Ponce de Leon said that name a man and then another man sang:

O Fountain of Bimini,
Now I've won here,
Pride, grace, and youth give me

With your wa-ter—
Pride, grace, and youth give me
For many a year!

"Men came and told me," said Ponce de Leon, "of Quivera, that city which fronts a river on which float canoes with prows of gold, great canoes which hold as many as forty Indians, each Indian with a crown of gold upon his head. They came to me and they told me of Quivera, wishing that I should go there with an army and take the place. Men came and told me of the Lake Guatavita. In that lake bathes El Dorado, the Gilded Man. He is the King of the Indians of that place. Every morning at sunrise the priests of his god rub him all over with fragrant gums. Then they blow upon his body powder of gold. All golden that King seems as he stands upon his raft in the sunset and is rowed across Lake Guatavita. And having come to the middle of the lake he plunges into it, and the golden powder upon his body becomes a gleam in the water. Those who have come with him throw into the lake their heavy golden bracelets and whatever other ornaments they may have upon them. The King plunges down to the bottom of the lake, and comes back upon the raft again, and that is done every day, and has been done for hundreds of years, and now the bottom of the lake is overlaid with golden dust and golden ornaments lie upon it. Men have come

to me to ask me to win Lake Guatavita, and to gather the gold that is in the lake. And I have refused them. For my thoughts were on no other place than Bimini, that island that lies in the sea that we look out on from Española.

"There is no gold, there is no silver there; there are no pearls, there are no spices. There is a fountain there, and whoever bathes in that fountain or drinks of its water will have again his or her youth, and will be as vigorous and as fair to look upon as they were at twenty, or twenty-three, or twenty-five.

"Indeed I have heard that in Bimini there are men and women who will not come back to the places in which they were known in times long ago. They know that they would be blamed for not living according to the years they have been in the world instead of living the way they do—feasting, and making love, and dancing under the trees in Bimini. They are old leaders of armies, old exploring men, old sacristans, and old beggars; they are old mistresses and old maid-servants, and they think of nothing but of feasting, and making love, and dancing under the trees of Bimini." And when he had said this, those who were around Ponce de Leon said, "We will go to Bimini."

Ponce de Leon was sixty years old when he made ready to sail to Bimini. He put on the

bright breastplate and the helmet he had won in many wars. He went into the garden where grew the orange trees he had planted and where the pool was that he had made. And when he walked in the garden, taking farewell of the trees and the pool, he heard the bells ringing in the churches he had builded, and in the sound of the bells he heard:

O Fountain of Bimini,
Now I've won here,
Pride, grace, and youth give me
With your wa-ter—
Pride, grace, and youth give me
For many a year!

And the next day, with that part of his followers who were most faithful to him, he went down to the harbor where his three ships were. His ships had all been made ready for a voyage.

There are, as has been told, seven hundred islands in the sea that is across from Española, and no one could tell the voyagers which island was Bimini. On every island they went to they heard of searchers for Bimini—white men in ships with sails, and red men in canoes—and they heard the song that assuredly had been made in Bimini:

Old soldiers, old seamen,
Are chasing the deer;
Their bodies are supple,
Though bent once they were.

Old women, old bodies,
Are dancing it there;
Their glances are sprightly,
Though their eyes once were blear.

O Fountain of Bimini,
Now I've won here,
Pride, grace, and youth give me
With your wa-ter—
Pride, grace, and youth give me
For many a year!

From island to island the searchers went, drinking at the springs and at the hidden fountains in each island; leaving behind them, too, on each island some man who had given up the quest, and who, marrying an Indian girl, had settled down to live in a straw hut there; some man who would sing to other searchers who came the song about Bimini.

In a while Ponce de Leon was left without men enough to sail his three ships. Then he was left without men enough to sail his two ships. And then, in one ship and with only a few followers, he sailed for islands that had not yet been visited.

They came to an island that seemed to have no living person upon it. They went through that island, eating the fruits they found growing there and drinking at every spring and at every hidden fountain. The rags that were their clothes dropped from their shrunken bodies. But still

Ponce de Leon kept his bright breastplate, and still he wore his polished helmet. Many of the searchers lay down and died upon that island. Then, at last, they met a human being.

She was an Indian woman. Behold! she was stooped and very wrinkled. But—hark! her voice was loud and very clear. "You have come to find Bimini," she called out to the searchers. "I will go with you and show you the way."

So the Old Woman went down to the ship with them. And for her sake Ponce de Leon renamed his ship, calling it La Vieja, the Old Woman. She stood at the wheel, and she piloted the ship around and between the islands, calling out the names of the islands, and telling Ponce de Leon that none of them was Bimini.

And now it seemed as if the sea wanted to destroy the ship that the searchers sailed in. The worms that were in the sea bored through the timbers so that the ship nearly settled down on the water. Night and day they had to work to bail the water out of the vessel. And when they were able to catch a shark and have it to eat they thought they had a fortunate day. The seams of the ship opened, the hoops fell off the water casks, and the water they had on board emptied out. But La Vieja still steered, and the ship still went on. And at last they were brought to a land that

La Vieja swore was Bimini—the Fountain of Youth, she said, was in that land.

Her voice roused the searchers from their daze and their torpor—it was so clear and so loud—and her words seemed to them to be true. And the searchers, all that were left of them, sang the song they had not sung nor had heard sung since the time they had two ships for their sailing; they sang the song that was about Bimini:

Old soldiers, old seamen,
Are chasing the deer;
Their bodies are supple,
Though bent once they were.

Old women, old bodies,
Are dancing it there;
Their glances are sprightly,
Though their eyes once were blear.

O Fountain of Bimini,
Now I've won here,
Pride, grace, and youth give me
With your wa-ter—
Pride, grace, and youth give me
For many a year!

They killed turtles that they found upon the shore, and they roasted the meat, and ate, and refreshed themselves, saying: "To-morrow we will set out to find those who are dancing and feasting under the trees of Bimini."

They set out upon their way, cutting through the thickets that were before them. "To Bimini," Ponce de Leon said to his men, to the few who now were left to him, but his voice and the voices of those who answered back to him were no louder than whispers. "To Bimini," La Vieja said, and her voice was clear and loud.

But man after man of Ponce de Leon's followers lay down in the jungle and died. Soon there were none left but Ponce de Leon and La Vieja. They came out of the thickets at last, and they went across a grassy country. And now they had companions. An old horse that had come up with them while they had been sleeping followed, hobbling behind them. And an old hound that came out of the grass went limping behind the horse. They went toward where they heard birds singing. Very loudly the birds sang in that place—it was as if every tree was crowded with birds. They went on, they went following the heavy parrots that flew before them. And then they came in sight of a glade, and La Vieja declared, and Ponce de Leon could not fail to believe that that glade was Bimini, and that the Fountain of Youth was there.

Behold: The trees around were the noblest and tallest that man had ever seen. A fragrance came from them, a murmur that was a music came from them. The trees stood round a spring, and the

waters of that spring bubbled up from the ground. Bright, bright were the bubbles! "This is Bimini," Ponce de Leon said, "and soon I will be with the people of Bimini."

Old soldiers, old seamen,
Are chasing the deer;
Their bodies are supple,
Though bent once they were.

Old women, old bodies,
Are dancing it there;
Their glances are sprightly,
Though their eyes once were blear.

Where were the people of Bimini? He called out, but no voices came answering him back. The old horse and the old hound went to the Fountain and drank. Then they lay down on the ground to sleep. And the old Indian woman, without drinking, lay down on the ground, too, to sleep.

"I will drink now," Ponce de Leon said, Ponce de Leon, the Governor of Española, the discoverer of Florida. He took off his breastplate and his helmet, and he stooped down to drink at the Fountain.

And even as he stooped down an arrow flew toward him. It pierced his chest, and Ponce de Leon fell down upon his face, his mouth to the bubbling water. An Indian beside one of the trees had shot the arrow. He went and he took

up the breastplate and the helmet that Ponce de Leon had laid down, and with these polished things in his hands he stalked away. The horse and the hound and the old Indian woman lay upon the ground. She wakened, the Indian woman, and she saw the horse and the hound, and it seemed to her that all their vigor had come back to them; she saw them a long way off and amongst the trees. And then she saw Ponce de Leon, shot through with an arrow. "This is Bimini," she said, "but those who were here have fled from it. Why, then, should I drink from the Fountain?" she said.

O Fountain of Bimini,
My years I still bear!

*"The Voyagers: Being Legends and Romances of Atlantic Discovery," by Padraic Colum. Illustrated by Wilfred Jones. The Macmillan Company, 1925.*

# STORY TELLING, NEW AND OLD

It has been discovered that there is still a place in the world for an oral art—for story-telling. Those who have charge of children's reading rooms in American libraries have had to rediscover and exercise that art, for children who come to borrow books remain to have stories told them. And so we have the most ancient of the arts being carried on in modern surroundings. At the suggestion of some of those modern and metropolitan story-tellers, the librarians, this book has been put together: the stories in it have been reshaped from stories in other books, and they have been put into such forms and such words as make it possible to deliver them naturally and simply by the human voice.

The story-teller whom I listened to when I was young had many advantages over the story-teller in one of our public libraries. He told his stories in the evening; he told them by the light of a candle and a peat fire—often by the light of a peat fire only. There were shadows upon the walls around. Nothing that he told us had to be visualized in the glare of day or by the glare of electric light. He had a language that had not

been written down; he had words that had not been made colorless by constant use in books and newspapers. He was free to make all sorts of rhymes and chimes in the language he used, and to use words that were meaningless except for the overtones of meaning that were in their sounds. He had various tags with which to end his stories. And he could make his hero start from the hilltop that was known to all his audience, and he could have his battle fought upon the strand that they had all been upon. His audience was small, no more than a score of people, and so he could be intimate in voice and manner. He had few gestures, this particular story-teller: sometimes he beat his hands together; sometimes he raised a stick that was by him to give solemnity to some happening. And outside was the silence of the night and the silence of a countryside.

All this is to say that the story-teller of my childhood days had a convention—a convention that he was master of and that was looked for and accepted by his audience. From him I learned that a story that is to be told has to be about happenings. That it has to be in sentences that can be easily and pleasantly carried over by the human voice. That it has nothing to say about states of mind. That in its descriptions it has to be free of generalities—not a catalogue of a poet's associations with the sea by way of description, let

us say, but the flash of the wave. That its characters should be explicable at every moment, even though they do odd and unpredictable things. And that they must be the kind of human beings that the human voice can shepherd—and the voice cannot shepherd divided, many-mooded, complicated people.

It would be well if the modern and metropolitan story-teller could do what that story-teller's art permitted him to do—to make certain descriptions purely conventional—the description of a ship sailing the sea, for instance; the description of a castle or of a lonely waste. By such conventionalizations he was able to get, what every one who undertakes to tell a story of some length has to try to get, points of rest, passages that are relief in the narrative. When he set his ship sailing upon the sea, when he set his hero wandering through a wilderness, the audience rested and the story-teller rested, not because there was nothing happening, but because what was happening was regular and anticipated. These conventionalized descriptions ("runs" the story-teller called them) were so placed in the story that they gave rests where rests were needed; they gave relief in the method of delivery, too, for the "run" was always spoken with a quicker rhythm, as if it were a piece of free verse; sometimes it was spoken to the beating of the story-teller's hands. "He set off,

and there was blackening on his soles, and holing in his shoes; the little birds were taking their rests at the butts of bushes and the tops of the trees, but if they were, he was not." How often has a "run" like this, and "runs" that were longer, occurred in the recital of a story of some quest. And such "runs," woven into it at intervals, give a more definite pattern to a story.

In the story told by the professional story-teller, or by that amateur of story-telling, the nurse in old countries, there are certain possessions of the hero or heroine—a sword, a helmet, a dress, a comb—that have to be made memorable. The story-teller shows his delight in such possessions; he makes them, not so much possessions as attributes of his hero or heroine: the mention of them recalls or foreshadows a happening. To be able to use such a possession in a story is to be able to give another gleam, to give another interest to it.

They have reverie behind them, these stories that have such patterns, such series of happenings, such simplicity of characterization as make it possible to deliver them orally to an unselected audience. This is true of traditional stories, and true of the stories for children that writers such as Hans Andersen and Rudyard Kipling have made up. And the best story-tellers are the men and women who seem to be giving us in the stories

they are telling fragments of their reverie: no matter how exciting the incidents they relate there is always reverie behind them. It is this quality of reverie, this dramatizing of something different from what is in our external consciousness, that makes the story told distinct from the story that is written to be read by the reader. It seems to me that a story that can be told has a value distinct from the value that belongs to a story that is for the reader—it carries over feelings that belong to something deeper in us than our external consciousness. And the art of the story-teller, I think, consists in giving spontaneity to a series of happenings. They have to be in formal series, for the story has to have distinct pattern. But the story-teller has to relate the happenings as if he or she had just discovered them as something going on. The pattern of the story has to be a familiar one, the characters in it have to have such simplicity that they can be presented directly and understood immediately.

### *Poetry As Well*

One has to talk of poetry, in so far as it is oral, in connection with oral stories. Children should be got not merely to read and know poetry, but to possess some part of the heritage of poetry. They should know poems by heart—a dozen, twenty,

forty, fifty poems. These poems should be there so that at any time they might well up within their minds. Plato put music amongst the subjects it was important to have youth trained in. Nowadays we do not look upon music as Plato looked upon it, as a foundation for knowledge; to us music is a separate course of study. And yet, when we think of what poetry, with its rhythm and structure, can give to childhood, we begin to feel that we understand why Plato put music with the few fundamental things that youth should have a training in.

We know that both poetry and music have something underlying them that holds our attention, that helps us to bring our minds to a focus. That underlying something is rhythm. The holding in the mind of certain rhythms—the rhythms of certain tunes, the rhythms of certain poems—gives us foundations for building on in our imaginative and intellectual life. A poem is a piece of human speech that can be mastered, whole or in passages, and kept in the memory. Its rhythm, its rhymes, are holds that we have on it. And when we have it in our memory we have something that our thoughts can focus themselves on. The person who has a dozen or so of poems in his or her memory has charms against straying thoughts. If he or she knows by heart an ode by Keats or by Shelley, his thoughts or her

thoughts can be held by rhythm, by structure, and they will not be hopelessly scattered. And by holding our thoughts from being scattered we win a victory for the mind.

The poems we hold in our minds are points of focus, patterns of order. Perhaps it was to give such points, such patterns, that Plato advocated a training in music as a foundation for general knowledge. Of course, there are other means than by poetry or music to get points of focus, patterns of order, into our minds. A technical or professional training that would ignore music and poetry could, no doubt, supply them. But the patterns of order left by poetry or by music are imaginative, and, therefore, are creative. Our minds become aroused by going over them; in a poem the rhythm, the rhymes, the images, suggest other rhythms, rhymes, and images. More than this: the great thing that a poem gives us when we refer to it in memory is a sense of something begun and finished—a thing complete.

### *Stories Again*

"I am persuaded that both children and the lower class of readers hate books which are written down to their capacity," Walter Scott noted on one occasion. "They love those that are composed for their elders and betters. I will

make, if possible, a book that a child will understand, yet a man will feel some temptation to peruse should he chance to take it up . . . the grand and interesting consists in ideas, not words." Scott, surely, was right in what he noted in these sentences. The story-teller must have respect for the child's mind and the child's conception of the world, knowing it for a complete mind and a complete conception. If a story-teller have that respect he need not be childish in his language in telling stories to children. If the action be clear and the sentences clear one can use a mature language. Strange words, out-of-the-way words do not bewilder children if there be order in the action and in the sentences. They like to hear such words. Children love language for its own sake; they treasure words as they treasure keepsakes. It is worth while to note that in American schools, where children are used only to a standardized language, they are particularly attracted to poetry in dialect.

It is more important to let a child's imagination develop than it is to labor to inculcate in him or her some correct ethical point of view. If a child have in his or her mind the images that imaginative literature can communicate—the heroic, sweet, or loving types that are in the world's great stories—it is much more likely that he or she will grow up into a fine human being than if

some austere mentor spoke to them out of every page of their reading. I think the mood of a story that is to be told to children should be one of kindliness. I do not mean that the characters in a story should be always kind to each other. I mean that those in the audience should be assured that the teller is inspired with a mood of kindliness for his conspicuous character. "Now you must know that the King had no horse to give Boots but an old broken-down jade," says the Norse story, "for his six other sons had carried off all the horses; but Boots did not care a pin for that; he sprang up on his sorry old steed. 'Farewell, father,' said he, 'I'll come back, never fear, and like enough I shall bring my brothers with me;' and with that he rode off." When we in the audience hear this we know that the teller of the tale has the right feeling for his hero.

With the mood of kindliness there should be the mood of adventure. The hero should be one who is willing to take strange paths in the morning and lie down under the giant's roof when the darkness falls. "After that they went around the castle, and at last they came to a great hall where the Trolls' two great swords hung high up on the wall. 'I wonder if you are man enough to wield one of these,' said the Princess. 'Who? I?' said the lad, ' 'twould be a pretty thing indeed if I couldn't wield one of these.' With that he put

two or three chairs atop of the other, jumped up, and touched the biggest sword with his finger tips, tossed it up in the air, and caught it again by the hilt; leaped down, and, at the same time, dealt such a blow with it on the floor that the whole hall shook." That is the humor proper to a hero. The good characters in the story should undoubtedly be fine and upright, but we should not insist on their being always good boys at school. If they are heroic and adventurous and have a simple-minded goodness it is enough; the stories they figure in need not bristle with moralities and recommendations to good conduct. And the old figures of romance should be left to the children. When Kings, Queens, and Princes have taken their leave of the political world they should still be left to flourish in the world of the child's romance. Witches, giants, dwarfs, gnomes, and trolls should be left to them, too.

Things need not be too simplified in that world. It will do no harm if things are left mysterious there—such mysterious things are "magic," and "magic" is an element that is not only accepted but is looked for. The probabilities that we know of from experience have no place in the world of the story that is primarily intended for a child. A tree may talk, a swan may change into a king's daughter, a castle may be built up in an instant. We know tree, swan, and castle by their limita-

tions, but a child knows them in their boundless possibilities. To a child each thing that is mentioned is distinct, unique, a thing in itself, having all the possibilities of a thing in Eden. Did we not know, in the time we flew kites, that there was a space in the atmosphere that no kite ever flew in before and that our kite might enter? The sense of boundless possibility should belong to things in stories told to children. This delight in things, this sense of the uniqueness of things, is in every story that children delight in. An old lamp may be Aladdin's. A key may open the door to mystery. A dish may be the supreme possession of a king. For children feel, as people with few possessions feel, the adventure and the enchantment that are in things.

### *For Educators*

There are public occasions on which elders make addresses to young people, telling them that they are about to go into the world. The world that they are thinking of on those occasions is the world of business, of social relations, of mature interests. Beside it, or over against it, there is another world—the world that is within each of the young people whom the address is being made to—the world of thought, meditation, intuition, imagination. The world of business, of social

relationships, mature interests, impresses boys and girls of a certain age, and it is not difficult to prepare them to live in it. And it should not be difficult to show them, not so much how to enter into, but how to keep native in the other world, the world of thought, meditation, intuition, imagination.

To say the least, it is well to have in a growing human being something that responds to the gathering of the clouds before nightfall; to have a feeling about the magnificent lines of an ocean-going ship; to be able to cherish this or that poem; to be able to read history intelligently and to relate it to the events of one's own time; to keep one's mind clear from the passions that take hold of crowds; to be able to communicate with the great people of the age, men and women, should one ever come near them actually. And the growing human being who is being addressed on these occasions would lose the power to feel, or to be able to do such things, if his or her mind is set too exclusively on the world of practical affairs, social relationships, mature interests.

There are no rules for getting on in the world that is alongside or over against our practical world; that world is in ourselves, and we can only get on in it by individual impulse, individual seeking, individual enlightenment. A little can be done to strengthen the impulse, the seeking, the

enlightenment. Oral communication of verse and stories is one way. For the human voice, when it can really charge itself with what is in a poem or a story, more powerfully than any other agency, can put into our deeper consciousness those lasting patterns which belong to the deeper consciousness of the race.

Through the possession of a part of the heritage of poetry, of story, children can enter or keep in the world that has been spoken about—the world of imagination, thought, and intuition. It would be well if they could receive some of this heritage orally, and, in the case of poetry, if they could receive it from some one who had regard for the rhythm of the verse, and was able to impart a delight in the rhythm and in the structure of verse. The possession of poetry is a possession that lasts, a possession that no one can take away from whoever has it; it is a talisman that gives an entrance into the world that we may not be separated from without loss to our humanity. For without some ability for making ourselves at home in the world of thought, imagination, intuition, a boy or a girl will never be able to understand all that is summed up in art and philosophy, will never have any deep feeling for religion, and will not be able to get anything out of the reading of history; in short, unless they are somewhat at

home in that world, they will live without any fineness in their lives.

Some time, perhaps soon, it will come to be recognized that it is as important to cultivate the imagination as it is to cultivate the will or the intelligence. At present systems of education are directed toward training the will or the intelligence. Perhaps the time is at hand when we will have an education that will be directed toward training the intelligence and the will through the imagination. For imagination is one of the great faculties; it is the one faculty common to all exceptional people—to soldiers, statesmen, saints; to artists, scientists, philosophers, and great business men. Says the Serpent to Eve in "Back to Methuselah," "She told it to me as a marvelous story of something that never happened to a Lillith that never was. She did not know that imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire; you will what you imagine; and at last you create what you will." The day may come when that sentence will be written above all places of education: "Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire; you will what you imagine; and at last you create what you will."

Date Due

FEB 3 1959 M

E
823.08
C726f

C726f
WITHDRAWN

# Berea College Library

Berea, Ky.

**GOOD BOOKS ARE FOR PLEASURE AND FOR PROFIT. THEY HELP MAKE LIFE WORTH WHILE.**

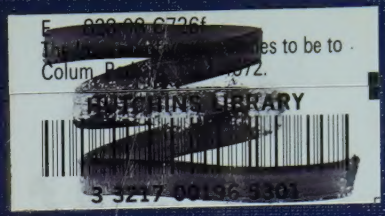
## Rules

Books may be kept for two weeks and then renewed for the same period unless needed by another person. This does not apply to unbound periodicals or "14 day books."

2 cents a day is charged for each book kept overtime. No person who has an unpaid fine may draw books. Any book is subject to recall at any time if needed for class use.

**SINCE OUR AIM IS TO HAVE A BOOK READ BY AS MANY AS WISH TO DO SO, PLEASE GIVE THIS BOOK GOOD CARE AND RETURN IT AS SOON AS READ.**

56407


FLETCHER LIBRARY